

Candidate Questions

Tim Schaffer, State Senate District 20

1) Ohioans receive the best health care when physicians serve as the leader in a team approach to medicine. Physicians are trained and licensed to provide comprehensive patient assessment and diagnosis and may order x-rays, chest scans, perform surgeries, and have full prescriptive authority. Physician extenders such as physician assistants, advanced practice registered nurses, physical therapists, and other providers have less education and training than physicians. However, organizations and lobbyists supporting physician extenders often pursue legislation granting access to patients that reach beyond their education and training, endangering patient care.

Would you support legislation that extends the scope of practice rights for physician extenders that would allow them to evaluate, test and treat patients without physician supervision? No

Comments: No, not if they are delivering medical care as defined in the ORC as the scope of practice of physicians. The supervision of a physician is a critical link to patient care and safety. I see the physician as the quarterback of the healthcare team.

2) HB 177, which would remove the collaboration agreement between APRNs (advanced practice registered nurses) and physicians, is being considered in the House Health Committee. The bill effectively allows independent practice authority for APRNs. Unfortunately, HB 177 jeopardizes optimum care by circumventing the physician-led, team-based approach.

Would you support or oppose HB 177? Oppose

Comments: As described above and if the bill allows services delivered beyond the scope of training, testing and experience of APRNs, then I would oppose it. However, I believe other legislation has been promoted that would recognize practice limits based on those three-legged stool standards of licensure.

3) Medicaid providers care for those most in need of health care services. The state's Medicaid system has endured fluctuating federal funding the last several years. Far too often, budget savings are proposed through cuts to Medicaid provider rates. These huge cuts would restrict access to health care for those who cannot seek treatment elsewhere.

As a legislator, would you support or oppose Medicaid provider rate cuts? Oppose

Comments: Medicaid already penalizes good providers who are expressing a desire to help the less fortunate and those in need of care by taking the cases often at a loss and by Medicaid not reimbursing providers accurately and promptly. We should find ways to encourage providers accepting Medicaid patients, not discourage them. I oppose further cuts in service reimbursement and support reforms in administration instead--it's for people who truly need it, not for those who don't.

4) As our state continues to grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic, do you support the following to help slow the spread of the virus?

- Masks/facial coverings: Yes
- Physical/social distancing: Yes
- Limited indoor gatherings: Yes
- A CDC-approved vaccine: Yes

5) Generally, do you support vaccines and immunizations as a way of preventing disease? (Examples: Hepatitis B, measles/mumps/rubella, polio, etc.) Yes

Comments:

6) The Ohio University Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine (OU-HCOM) is the state's largest medical school. OU-HCOM now graduates 1,000 osteopathic physicians every four years. Further, OU-HCOM consistently maintains the highest in-state residency program match rate of the seven medical schools in Ohio. Now more than ever, osteopathic physicians are providing and benefiting health care throughout the state.

To that end, will you protect state funding for OU-HCOM as a means to benefit health access and provide quality health care in Ohio? Yes

Comments: It's especially important for my region of the state.

7) Do you know a DO? If so, who are they and how are you connected to them?

I worked with many DOs in my years working at the American Diabetes Association. I helped coordinate continuing education seminars at OU for DOs and others. I also enjoy working with Dr. Terry Johnson in the Senate. I often seek his guidance when healthcare issues come before the legislature. He is a great asset to us!