



# Ohio Legislative Service Commission

## Bill Analysis

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### H.B. 124

131st General Assembly  
(As Introduced)

Reps. T. Johnson and Huffman, Grossman, Blessing

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## BILL SUMMARY

- Authorizes a physician, advanced practice registered nurse, or physician assistant to prescribe a drug for a sexual partner of a patient diagnosed with chlamydia, gonorrhea, or trichomoniasis, without examining the sexual partner.
- Specifies that a physician, advanced practice registered nurse, or physician assistant may issue a prescription for not more than two sexual partners of the patient.
- Authorizes a pharmacist to dispense a drug pursuant to a prescription issued in accordance with the bill.
- Grants immunity from civil liability, criminal prosecution, or professional discipline to a physician, advanced practice registered nurse, physician assistant, or pharmacist acting in good faith and in accordance with the bill.

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## CONTENT AND OPERATION

### Expedited partner therapy

The bill establishes a limited exception to the requirement that a licensed health professional who is authorized to prescribe drugs must personally examine the intended recipient of a prescribed drug.<sup>1</sup> The bill authorizes a physician<sup>2</sup> or an advanced practice registered nurse or physician assistant holding a certificate to prescribe (hereinafter "prescriber") to issue a prescription for a drug to treat chlamydia,

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<sup>1</sup> See e.g., Ohio Administrative Code 4723-9-09, 4730-2-07, and 4731-11-09.

<sup>2</sup> Under the bill, a prescriber does not include a podiatrist. R.C. 4731.93(A).

gonorrhea, or trichomoniasis, without having examined the intended recipient of the drug, if the following conditions are met:

- (1) The intended recipient is a sexual partner of the prescriber's patient;
- (2) The patient has been diagnosed with chlamydia, gonorrhea, or trichomoniasis;
- (3) The patient reports to the prescriber that the sexual partner is unable or unlikely to be evaluated or treated by a health professional.<sup>3</sup>

### **Prescription contents**

Under the bill, a prescription must include the sexual partner's name and address, if known. However, if the prescriber is unable to obtain the partner's name and address, the prescription must instead include the patient's name and address, along with the words "expedited partner therapy" or the letters "EPT." Existing law requires that any prescription indicate the patient's full name and address.<sup>4</sup>

### **Limit on the number of treated partners**

The bill limits the number of sexual partners that a prescriber may treat without examination. It provides that a prescriber may issue a prescription for not more than a total of two sexual partners of the patient.

### **Additional duties of prescribers**

For each prescription issued under the bill, the prescriber must do all of the following:

- (1) Provide the patient with information concerning the drug for the purpose of sharing the information with the sexual partner, including directions for use of the drug and any contraindications, side effects, or adverse reactions associated with the drug;
- (2) Recommend to the patient that the sexual partner seek treatment from a health professional;
- (3) Document all of the following in the patient's record:
  - (a) The name of the prescribed drug and its dosage;

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<sup>3</sup> R.C. 4723.489, 4730.432, and 4731.93.

<sup>4</sup> O.A.C. 4729-5-30.

(b) That information concerning the drug was provided to the patient for the purpose of sharing the information with the sexual partner;

(c) If known, any adverse reactions the sexual partner experiences from treatment with the drug.

### **Contacting the sexual partner**

The bill authorizes a prescriber who issues a prescription in accordance with its provisions to contact the sexual partner for whom the drug is intended. If the prescriber contacts the partner, the prescriber must do all of the following:

(1) Inform the sexual partner that he or she may have been exposed to chlamydia, gonorrhea, or trichomoniasis;

(2) Encourage the sexual partner to seek treatment from a health professional;

(3) Explain the treatment options available to the partner, including treatment with a prescription drug, directions for use of the drug, and any contraindications, side effects, or adverse reactions associated with the drug;

(4) Document in the patient's record that the prescriber contacted the sexual partner.

If the prescriber does not contact the partner, the prescriber must document that fact in the patient's record.

### **Pharmacists authorized to fill EPT prescriptions**

With respect to a prescription for a drug issued in accordance with the bill's procedures, the bill authorizes a pharmacist to dispense the drug and, if necessary, label it without the sexual partner's name if the prescription contains the words "expedited partner therapy" or the letters "EPT." Current Board of Pharmacy rules require that a pharmacist dispense a drug only pursuant to a prescription issued in the usual course of bona fide treatment and label the drug with the patient's full name and address.<sup>5</sup>

Under the bill, for each drug dispensed, the pharmacist must provide information concerning the following: directions for use of the drug as well as any contraindications, side effects, or adverse reactions associated with the drug. The bill specifies that it does not affect the authority of a pharmacist to distribute information concerning a drug as required by federal law.

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<sup>5</sup> O.A.C. 4729-5-16 and 4729-5-30.

## Immunity

The bill grants immunity from civil liability, criminal prosecution, or professional discipline to a prescriber or pharmacist acting in good faith and in accordance with the bill.<sup>6</sup>

## Chlamydia, gonorrhea, and trichomoniasis background

### Chlamydia

Chlamydia is a common sexually transmitted infection that can infect both men and women and can lead to serious health problems. It can cause permanent damage to a woman's reproductive system, making it difficult or impossible for the woman to become pregnant. Untreated chlamydia may also increase a person's chances of getting or spreading HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. Most people who have chlamydia have no symptoms.<sup>7</sup> Chlamydia is usually treated with antibiotic drugs. Treatment for sexual partners is recommended in order to prevent the infection from being passed back and forth.<sup>8</sup>

### Gonorrhea

Gonorrhea is a sexually transmitted infection that can infect both men and women and can lead to serious health problems. It can cause infections in the genitals, rectum, and throat. If untreated, it may lead to sterility and may increase a person's chances of getting or spreading HIV. Gonorrhea is very common, especially among young people ages 15 to 24 years old.<sup>9</sup> It is usually treated with antibiotic drugs; however, treatment is becoming more difficult as drug-resistant strains of gonorrhea are increasing.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> R.C. 4723.489, 4729.282, 4730.432, and 4731.93.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention, Division of STD Prevention, *Chlamydia – CDC Fact Sheet* (last visited April 20, 2015), available at <<http://www.cdc.gov/std/chlamydia/stdfact-chlamydia.htm>>.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, *Chlamydia* (last visited April 20, 2015), available at <<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/001345.htm>>.

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention, Division of STD Prevention, *Gonorrhea – CDC Fact Sheet* (last visited April 20, 2015), available at <<http://www.cdc.gov/std/gonorrhea/stdfact-gonorrhea.htm>>.

<sup>10</sup> U.S. National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, *Gonorrhea* (last visited April 20, 2015), available at <<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/gonorrhea.html>>.



## Trichomoniasis

Trichomoniasis is a very common sexually transmitted infection and is considered the most curable of sexually transmitted infections. It is estimated that 3.7 million people in the United States have the infection, but only 30% develop any symptoms. Without treatment, the infection can last for months or even years. Trichomoniasis can increase the risk of getting or spreading other sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. Trichomoniasis can be cured with a single dose of prescription antibiotics; however, a person who has been treated can get it again. It is recommended that a person's sexual partners also be treated.<sup>11</sup>

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### HISTORY

ACTION	DATE
Introduced	03-18-15

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<sup>11</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Trichomoniasis – CDC Fact Sheet* (last visited April 20, 2015), available at <http://www.cdc.gov/std/trichomonas/stdfact-trichomoniasis.htm>.

