

Rating: Loading... Ohio ASHP Members Successfully Advocate for Provider Status

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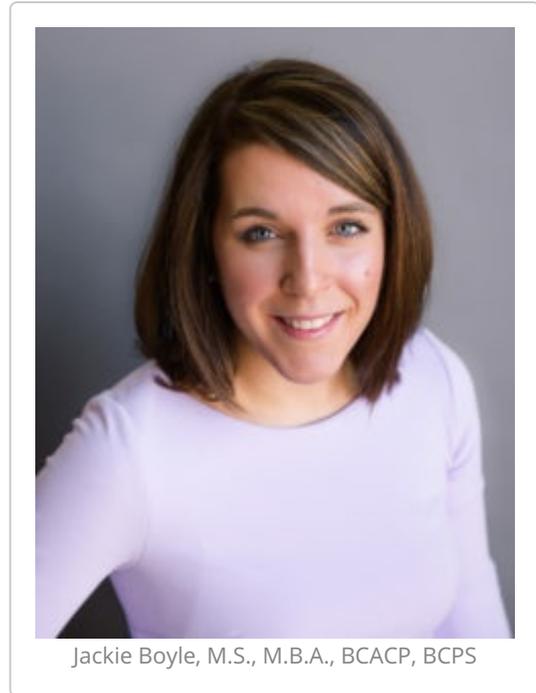
ON APRIL 5, 2019, AN OHIO LAW went into effect that will help pharmacists practice at the top of their license by officially recognizing them as providers. This groundbreaking legislation occurred thanks to the dedication and persistence of pharmacists across the state, including ASHP members Jackie Boyle, Keith D. Posendek, and Mary Ann R. Dzurec.

Under S.B. 265, which was signed by Governor John Kasich on January 4, 2019, pharmacists are allowed to bill public and private insurance companies directly for the services they provide to patients. “As a result of having provider status and the ability to bill directly for their services, pharmacists will be able to create new and innovate ways of delivering patient care,” said

Jackie Boyle, M.S., M.B.A., BCACP, BCPS, Associate Professor of Pharmacy Practice at Northeast Ohio Medical University. She is also the Immediate Past President of the Ohio Society of Health-System Pharmacists (OSHP). “Several healthcare models already exist—the traditional hospital model, the clinic model, and the community pharmacy model,” Boyle explained. “As we see more and more technology moving into healthcare like telehealth and artificial intelligence, we can create care models that are more convenient for patients.”

A Passion for Advocacy

Boyle, an ASHP member since 2008, has always been interested in advocacy. She completed an elective residency experience during her PGY2 with the ASHP Government Relations Division in 2014. During that time, Boyle had the opportunity to review several new pieces of legislation that were being introduced, including one concerning biosimilars. She also visited Capitol Hill to talk with legislators about provider status and the role of the pharmacist on the healthcare team—all of which fueled her passion for advocating on behalf of her colleagues and profession.



Jackie Boyle, M.S., M.B.A., BCACP, BCPS

Since cultivating this interest, Boyle has become a voice for pharmacy in Ohio. When the opportunity arose to advocate for provider status for pharmacists, she jumped at it. Boyle testified in front of the Ohio Senate in support of S.B. 265, where she stressed the importance of provider status. "I explained that this bill is critically important to the public health of the state. It expands pharmacists' ability to work in direct patient care roles and use their expertise to achieve positive health outcomes," Boyle said. "This change would increase patient access to pharmacist-provided care."

Boyle included several anecdotes about how pharmacists can impact patient care in her testimony. For example, she explained how one of her patients recovering from a heart attack was prescribed a medication that influenced his heart rate. Boyle identified a more appropriate medication. A few years later, the patient came back to tell her about the progress he had made and thanked her for changing his life.

A Team Effort

Although Boyle was instrumental in pushing S.B. 265 forward, she stressed that getting the law passed was very much a team effort. Many pharmacists in Ohio, including ASHP members, contributed to the cause.

Keith D. Posendek, Pharm.D., BCPS, BCGP, Clinical Pharmacist Specialist at Adena Regional Medical Center in Chillicothe, participated in a letter-writing campaign, including emails and handwritten notes, in support of S.B. 265. He also called politicians' offices. Although he didn't speak to legislators directly, he talked to staff members about the services pharmacists provide.

Dr. Posendek, who has been an ASHP member since 2015, noted that another valuable part of his advocacy was to spread the word about S.B. 265 to other pharmacists. He urged his pharmacy colleagues to remind lawmakers that pharmacists make vital contributions to the community and improve the health of the constituents politicians represent.

"Anything helps, whether it's writing to your politician, calling them, visiting them, or going to local political action committee meetings," Dr. Posendek said. "It's nice to remind [your local lawmakers] that you are a constituent and part of their community. Tell them that you are advocating for an issue because you're a pharmacist and also because you're part of the community and can make a difference."



Keith D. Posendek, Pharm.D., BCPS, BCGP

A Seat at the Table

Mary Ann R. Dzurec, Pharm.D., BCACP, Ambulatory Care Pharmacy Specialist at MetroHealth, a safety net health system providing inpatient and outpatient care to the underserved in Cleveland, also lobbied legislators by sending letters encouraging them to support S.B. 265.

Dr. Dzurec, who has been an ASHP member throughout her nearly 35-year career, precepts a longitudinal advocacy rotation for pharmacy residents at MetroHealth. Throughout the year-long rotation, she teaches the residents about the importance of working with state lobbyists and directly reaching out to legislators. Dr. Dzurec and the residents review pending legislation and Ohio Board rule proposals, and provide formal written comments.

She believes that pharmacists are well-equipped to create a pathway to better healthcare for patients. "My advice to pharmacists and pharmacy students is to take a leadership role in promoting the pharmacist's role in a health care setting. You'll find a great deal of satisfaction in your work, and your patients will appreciate you for it," said Dr. Dzurec.

By Kenya McCullum



Mary Ann R. Dzurec, Pharm.D., BCACP