

Candidate Questions

Rita Darrow, Ohio House of Representatives District 31

1) Should everyone have access to high-quality health care? Strongly agree

Comments: The Affordable Care Act and the expansion of Medicaid have been successful in bringing quality affordable healthcare to Ohio working families. I'll make sure that these policies aren't reversed. Ohio has one of the worst records in the nation in addressing our problems of opioid addiction and overdose deaths. I will support increased funding for efforts to encourage stakeholder involvement and collaborative decision-making, establish a full continuum of care, institute community education, establish a system for data collection, and disseminate information more effectively.

2) 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: This is difficult to answer with a simple "yes" or "no". Physician extenders, well utilized, can expand access to effective health care and treatment. That said, they are most effective when they are part of a team led and guided by physicians. I would, though, support policies that assured that physicians actually do lead and guide the extenders.

3) As a profession, the OOA highly values the physician-patient relationship. Physicians must be able to exercise their clinical judgment and practice evidence-based medicine without legislative or regulatory interference. Further, the OOA opposes any attempt to criminalize a physician's medical actions or treatment plans.

What is your feeling on this position? Strongly agree

Comments: While the government is charged with establishing policies and regulations that assure health care delivery is safe and effective, I will oppose any policies that interfere in any way with the physician-patient relationship and will certainly oppose any efforts to criminalize for strictly ideological reasons, the physician's treatment plans.

4) As our state grappled with the COVID-19 pandemic last year, we saw medical misinformation and distrust of science compound the problem. Now, routine vaccinations among children are lagging behind pre-pandemic levels. Missing even one routine vaccine can disrupt a child's immunization schedule. Diseases like polio, rubella, measles, and whooping cough are rare today because of vaccinations.

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

Comments: Of course. There is no question whatsoever that public health is promoted and assured when vaccinations are widely available and widely utilized.

5) Legislation has been introduced in the Ohio Legislature several times (HB 221 this session) that would remove the collaboration agreement between advanced practice registered nurses and physicians. This proposal jeopardizes optimum care by circumventing the physician-led, team-based approach and allowing independent practice authority for APRNs.

Would you support or oppose HB 221 and similar legislation? Oppose

Comments: As above, APRNs are most effective when they serve as part of a physician-led team. Again, policies that assure physicians actively carry out their responsibilities to lead and guide the team may be needed.

6) 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: Some legislators would like to severely restrict Medicaid, if not get rid of it altogether. I will energetically fight any such efforts and will support actions that seek to expand Medicaid coverage.

7) 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: State funding for OU-HCOM helps assure safe and effective delivery of health care to Ohio residents. I will work to protect its state funding.

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

No.