

Candidate Questions

Anita Somani, Ohio House of Representatives District 11

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

Comments: Universal health care improves health outcomes as we see with hypertension and diabetes when people age into Medicare. Access to high quality health care is critical to a healthier state and country.

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: As a physician who works with residents, medical students and other students such as PA's and NP's one common theme is that students who go into extender positions do not want the final responsibility of making decisions that affect a patient's care while medical students choose to become doctors because they want to have the extra training and responsibility.

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: Health care is already facing so many challenges when it comes to burnout and access that adding legislative and regulatory interference in the form of criminalizing care will only make access to care harder and will increase the physician shortage in Ohio.

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: Physicians have not seen illnesses that vaccines protect against and if illnesses like polio and others come back it will challenge physician's ability to care for these patients and will hurt public health.

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: I was endorsed by the Ohio Nurses Association despite my honesty about this type of legislation.

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: The cost of health care is least impacted by reimbursement to physicians but it is unfortunately always looked at as a place to reduce the cost of care.

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: I work with many DO medical students and residents and strongly believe that funding needs to continue to the OU-HCOM schools.

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

Sarah Coffey, Brian Dusseau, Corinne Calo, Kennedy Oveneri, Brie Plante, Kristin Ryan, Julius Musenze, Mona Prasad, Simi Bhullar, Jennifer Lykens - All friends and colleagues. I am also involved with the OhioHealth Diversity Scholars Program and my first student who is now in practice was at OU-Athens.