



Testimony of Michael C. Barnes, Esq. before the
Pennsylvania House Committee on Professional Licensure

September 18, 2012

Chairwoman Harhart and Esteemed Committee Members:

Thank you for considering House Bill 1635, a bill to reduce prescription drug abuse in Pennsylvania. I represent the not-for-profit Center for Lawful Access and Abuse Deterrence (CLAAD), a national organization committed to reducing prescription drug abuse while protecting patient access to care.

Since 2009, CLAAD's *National Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Strategy* has encouraged the adoption of technologies to impede the intentional abuse of prescription medications. The *National Strategy* has earned the endorsements of over 30 organizations, including the Drug Free America Foundation, National Family Partnership, American Chronic Pain Association, and NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals. The federal prescription drug abuse prevention plan also includes support for abuse-deterrent medications.

Some companies have already removed their traditional opioids from the market in favor of abuse-deterrent products. Public health and safety data indicates that these new products are less commonly abused.

As practitioners learn the value of prescribing abuse-deterrent opioids, it is imperative that pharmacists follow suit and dispense them. An abuse-deterrent medication should only be substituted with another abuse-deterrent product.

Our organization is encouraging the manufacturers of both branded and generic opioids to make their products safer. We know it is possible to do so at no additional cost to consumers.

House Bill 1635 is not about branded versus generic medications, as bill opponents will have you believe. It is about medications that are easily abused, versus those that are not so easily abused – and distinguishing between the two. This bill will provide Pennsylvania's pharmacists a quick reference to know which *branded and generic* medications incorporate abuse-deterrent technologies. It will facilitate – not impede – generic substitution.

As soon as the legislature passes House Bill 1635, pharmaceutical companies will have an immediate incentive to make their products safer. A failure to act on this legislation preserves the *status quo*. We can all agree that the *status quo* is unacceptable.

CLAAD urges you to heed the recommendations of the 30 organizations endorsing the *National Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Strategy*, and act in accordance with federal policy, by approving House Bill 1635.