



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Contact: Dale Butland, 614-783-5833

[press@DeceptiveRxIssue.org](mailto:press@DeceptiveRxIssue.org)

**MAJOR LGBT AND HIV/AIDS ORGANIZATIONS JOIN “NO ON ISSUE 2” CAMPAIGN**  
*Equitas Health, Caracole, and Stonewall Democrats of Central Ohio latest to join coalition*

Columbus, OH – Three trusted voices in Ohio’s LGBT community, including two of the state’s largest organizations treating HIV/AIDS victims, have joined the “No on Issue 2” [coalition](#), now made up of nearly 80 organizations.

[Equitas Health](#), headquartered in Columbus, is a nonprofit community-based healthcare system. With 16 offices in 11 cities that serve over 67,000 people, Equitas Health is the largest HIV/AIDS treatment organization in the state of Ohio.

[Caracole](#), headquartered in Cincinnati, seeks to reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS through housing, care and prevention by serving more than 1,500 clients in an eight-county region of Southwest Ohio. For the past 30 years, Caracole has been a state and national leader in setting best practices for AIDS Service Organizations.

[Stonewall Democrats of Central Ohio](#) works to ensure sensitivity, understanding and support for issues of importance to the LGBT and allied communities, particularly in the areas of education, healthcare and civil rights.

Said Bill Hardy, President and CEO of Equitas Health:

“While Issue 2 purports to lower prescription drug costs, the reality is that it could increase drug costs for state programs and the majority of Ohioans, while also reducing patient access to medication. Many drugs used by Equitas Health patients already receive as good a discount, if not better, than the VA. While not lowering the cost of drugs for our patients, Issue 2 would throw state prescription drug programs into a state of confusion, litigation and, ultimately, higher prices.”

Linda Seiter, Executive Director of Caracole, said:

“While we support a comprehensive, national effort aimed at accountability, reform and universal access for all Americans, we do not believe a state-by-state effort is an efficient, fair or equitable way to tackle the problem of inflated drug costs. We’re concerned that Issue 2 will lead to cost-shifting and higher prices for privately insured individuals. We’re concerned about the prospect of reduced formularies and, therefore, decreased access to certain drugs. Caracole represents some of Ohio’s most vulnerable citizens, and for them, we stand in opposition to Issue 2.”

Said Stonewall Democrats of Central Ohio President Michael Liggett:

“Issue 2’s promise of lower drug prices sounds good on the surface, but experts who have studied the issue say it won’t do what it promises and may well make matters worse. The fact that organizations like Equitas Health and Caracole—which continue to do such important work for those affected by HIV/AIDS—are opposing this ballot measure has enormous credibility with the Stonewall Democrats of Central Ohio. We stand with them and urge the LGBT community to vote no on Issue 2.”