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Testimony of Dr. Anup Patel, Director, Complex Epilepsy Clinic at Nationwide Children's Hospital Presented to the House Finance Committee

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Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Cera, and members of the House Finance Committee. It is my pleasure to testify in support of the amendment offered by Representative LaTourette to create a \$1 million matching grant for Make-A-Wish Ohio in the State of Ohio's budget, **H.B. 49**.

I am the Director of the Complex Epilepsy Clinic at Nationwide Children's Hospital, as well as a member of the National Make-A-Wish Medical Advisory Council. As a physician, I believe in the mission of this organization and have witnessed firsthand the life-changing impact wishes bring my patients and their families.

Dae'Shaun's Story

One example of how a wish can transform a life is a young man named Dae'Shaun. He has a form of epilepsy that is very difficult to control. We had reached a point in his treatment where despite best efforts to control the seizures, his condition continued to worsen. It was at this time that Dae'Shaun had his wish granted to meet his idol, Chris Paul, of the Los Angeles Clippers.

When he returned home from his wish, Dae'shaun was happier, stronger, and more energetic. For the first time in his life, he was seizure free. I wish I could take credit for his improvement, but that simply would not be true. I've seen similar results over and over with our kids.

Therefore, I wondered if research could prove what I was seeing: Is there a decrease in hospital use after a Wish? Is there a healthcare savings from this experience? So I began a study.

Our Wish Impact Study and Its Key Findings

The basic premise of the study was to compare kids at Nationwide Children's Hospital who received a Wish in the last five years to a control group of kids comparable in diagnosis and disease severity who did not receive a Wish.

Within this population, we assessed a two year span of hospital utilization and related medical charges. A team of researchers from Nationwide Children's volunteered countless hours to ensure we got this study right. The results of our study are compelling:

- The children who did not get wishes had no measurable difference in the number of hospital visits or treatment cost from one year to the next.
- By comparison, Wish kids had fewer unplanned hospitalizations, charges, and lengths of stay in the first year after their wish. There also was a decrease in planned hospitalizations, length of stay, and charges in the one year after their Wish experience.

A 50% Healthcare Cost Reduction in the First Year for those Receiving Wishes

We also compared data one year before the Wish compared to one year after for healthcare charges. The year before a Wish, hospital charges averaged \$250,000 for each kid. After the wish, hospital charges decreased significantly to an average of \$124,000—that's a 50% cost reduction.

Therefore, **our research shows that, on average, a Wish results in a \$126,000 savings in healthcare costs in the first year following the Wish.** These kids do not have a difference in insurance which means there is no discrimination in the families' ability to pay for care.

Our research shows that, on average, granting a child a wish results in a \$126,000 savings for healthcare costs in the first year following the wish.

In short, what we found is reportable data to support the medical and financial return of a wish. This is the first study of its kind and we are very proud of it and I am very proud of the team that helped put this together.

Wishes are more than a nice thing. In fact, they are a smart investment in providing the best care possible to a child facing a life-threatening medical condition. I've seen the patients, and I've seen the data—Make-A-Wish enables children to spend more time outside the walls of a hospital, provides a better quality of life, lowers a family's financial burden, and truly transforms lives.

Thank you for your willingness to consider this amendment to help Make-A-Wish Ohio grant more wishes. Please know that any public funding allocated for wishes has a significant positive effect and now we have research that shows that these kids and families have a better quality of life and their medical condition impacts their lives less due to a wish.

Thank you for your time and consideration and I'm happy to take any questions you may have.