



Dear Chairman Lipps and Members of the Ohio House Health Committee,

My name is Charlene York of Oxford and I am the Ohio Rare Action Network Volunteer State Ambassador. I am here to share my support for House Bill 469, legislation that would help rare disease patients be able to afford their necessary prescription drugs.

Rare diseases affect one in 10 persons here in the United States and we estimate that here could be over 1 million Ohioans affected with one of the over 7,000 rare diseases. The majority of those Ohioans have no cure or treatment for their specific disease.

Those persons affected will face many obstacles such as finding the right diagnosis, the right doctor, and creating a care plan which may involve a medical team involving doctors, therapists and specialists. Affected persons could also face purchasing medical equipment or having home nursing care in addition to worrying about the cost of medications. Some of those medications will be costly to the person and be a huge financial burden to them and their caregivers. Having outside assistance in paying for that medication helps immensely. And allowing that assistance apply to one's copay is such a cost saving opportunity to the affected person. Insurances should not dictate where one person gets one's money to pay for one's co-pay deductible. The fact of not having co-pay assistance is so financially discriminatory for those living with a rare disease. This should be the least of their worries or concerns.

States have the authority to require the health insurance plans they regulate apply co-pay assistance program contributions towards a patient's cost-sharing requirements and HB 469 would do just that.

I do hope that Ohio will do the right thing and allow all copayments regardless of where they come from count to help patients afford their prescription drugs.

Thank you.