



Multiple Sclerosis
Association of America

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May 31, 2020

Honorable Chairman P. Scott Lipps
House Health Committee
Ohio State Legislature
Columbus, OH | 43215

Dear Chairman Lipps,

My name is Rebecca King and I am the Director of Education and Healthcare Relations for the Multiple Sclerosis Association of America (MSAA) – a 501c3 focused on the mission of improving lives today within the greater MS community of Ohio and nationwide.

Recognizing our 50th anniversary this year, MSAA has established an excellent record of fair and balanced public positions on various MS issues and prioritizing the needs of the patient and their care partners. As a leading resource for the entire MS community, and dedicated to improving lives through vital services and support, we are strong advocates for lowering sky-rocketing drug costs that many individuals living with chronic diseases, like MS, are facing.

I am writing you today in support of HB 469, which will protect vulnerable populations, like the MS community, from enduring additional financial burdens as a result of today's complex healthcare market. According to a 20-year analysis published by Oregon State University, a significant portion of common medications used to treat MS have more than doubled their market price allowing for prescription costs to reach \$100,000 or more. Copay cards from drug manufacturers can not only have a significant impact on an individual's economic viability, but also provide opportunity for patients to shift their focus on other meaningful areas of life such as work and contributions to their community.

Copay accumulator programs that are now trending across the country deplete any financial assistance that copay cards can provide to lower- and middle-income families. In return, patients on expensive drug therapies are forced to either adjust their treatment plans or forgo filling their prescriptions entirely. No one should have to choose buying food for their family, or paying for important home utilities, over life-saving drug therapy plans.

When patients are forced to ration their drug therapy treatments, the results can be costly for both their health and the economy. Medication adherence can be challenging for any chronic condition, but even more so for those who depend on their drug therapies to keep severe disease symptoms at bay. Non-adherence can lead to an increase in emergency department visits and hospital stays and is 100 percent preventable. A review



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published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* estimates that non-adherence can cost the healthcare system anywhere between \$100 and \$289 billion annually.

At MSAA, we believe that we share a common goal – to lower the financial healthcare burden on families nationwide. While there have been tremendous strides in developing new drug therapy regimens over the past two decades, the benefit is lost if patients with MS cannot afford to access those medications. Copay accumulator programs create just another barrier to access treatment, especially for those living with a chronic illness. Passing HB 469 will not only improve the lives of the MS community residing in the great state of Ohio, but establishing state legislation that protects patients will ultimately influence these decisions at the national level.

If you have any questions, I would be more than willing to provide further insight into our concerns about the impact that copay accumulator programs may have on access to care for MS patients. I can be reached at (800) 532-7667, x144 or rking@mymsaa.org. Thank you for your time and considering our written testimony.

Respectfully,

Rebecca King

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