**Written Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 121 before the**

**Ohio Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions Committee**

**Senator Jay Hottinger, Chairman**

**By Judy Brandell, MSN, RN, CBCN**

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**Mercy Health, Fairfield Hospital**

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Chairman Hottinger, Vice-Chairman Hackett, Ranking Member Brown and members of the Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions Committee, my name is Judy Brandell and I am submitting written testimony in support of SB 121. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 121, sponsored by Senator John Eklund.

My role as a nurse navigator in our Breast Center at Mercy Health in Fairfield, OH has allowed me to see first-hand how tomosynthesis or 3D mammography is improving care to the women we serve in our community. This is especially true for those women with dense breast tissue.

I have seen and experienced patients being diagnosed with an early breast cancer with tomosynthesis that we could not see on a 2D image of the same tissue or was so subtle that it could have been missed. As a nurse that accompanies women through the cancer diagnosis, it can make a significant difference in treatment choices to diagnosis cancer at an earlier stage. “What stage am I?, and will I need chemotherapy? or a mastectomy?” are often the first questions women have when hearing the news they have cancer.

We have developed educational materials to help women understand the value of 3D mammography but the wide variation of insurance coverage has been a stumbling block for many women. This is in part due to many women not understanding what breast density is and what dense tissue looks like in general. We encourage women to check with their insurance ahead of time and sometimes even the day of their test when possible but most times this has not been realistic. Women are often confused and intimidated by their insurance coverage and the changes from year to year. So if the technologists and nurses don’t know for sure if they are covered, they end up declining due to potential additional and unknown costs. From my perspective, it’s especially frustrating that the younger age range, who more frequently have dense and sometimes extremely dense breast tissue, will decline due to the inconsistency of coverage.

Senate Bill 121 would make it clear that tomosynthesis is part of screening mammography and provide certainty to our patients that they have coverage when tomosynthesis is used to better detect any potential abnormalities.

Thank you again for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of SB 121. I urge your favorable vote on this important bill.