



**State Senator Hearcel Craig**

**District 15**

**State Senator Nickie J. Antonio**

**District 23**

Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee

Senate Bill 230 Sponsor Testimony

Designate Diabetic Ketoacidosis (DKA) Day

December 3, 2019

Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Huffman, and members of the Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of Senate Bill 230, which would designate April 26 as Diabetic Ketoacidosis Awareness Day. This bill is one of five that we recently introduced to promote diabetes awareness, make insulin more affordable and save lives.

Diabetic ketoacidosis is a life-threatening medical complication that can impact diabetics who do not have enough insulin. Without insulin, our bodies cannot turn sugar into energy and thus, they break down fat instead. This process produces blood acids, or ketones, that can lead to DKA.<sup>1</sup>

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there are approximately 145,000 hospitalizations due to DKA complications in the U.S. each year. The average cost for treatment is \$17,500, costing Americans \$2.4 billion annually.<sup>2</sup>

DKA can occur before a person knows they are diabetic, serving as a traumatic precursor to a diabetes diagnosis. DKA can also occur when a person is receiving diabetic treatment and is especially common among diabetics who ration their insulin – something that only patients in the United States do in the developed world. This is alarming given that one in four Ohioans ration their insulin, with potentially fatal consequences.

Unfortunately, this bill was written to commemorate a tragic occurrence. Antavia Worsham was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes when she was 16 and received her insulin through the Bureau of

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/diabetic-ketoacidosis/symptoms-causes/syc-20371551>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pdfs/data/statistics/national-diabetes-statistics-report.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2018/11/21/insulin-prices-diabetes-antoinette-worsham>

Children with Medical Handicaps until she aged out of the program at 21. By then, Antavia worked two jobs and attended college. Even with health insurance, Antavia was unable to cover the increasing cost of insulin. She even received extra insulin from her grandfather and sister, but when that was not enough she would ration.<sup>3</sup> On April 26, 2017, Antavia was found dead by her 17-year-old brother, with an empty insulin pen by her side. Her cause of death was diabetic ketoacidosis.

We chose April 26 as DKA Day to honor Antavia and all those who have died because they can't afford the skyrocketing price of insulin. We want to raise awareness about diabetic ketoacidosis and the dangers of rationing insulin. It's important to note that companion legislation, HB 379, passed the House Health committee unanimously earlier last month.

We believe this bill has the potential to save lives. Today, we urge similar support for SB 230. Thank you, Chairman, for the opportunity to present our testimony. We welcome any questions at this time.