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Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee, thank you for allowing me to be here today to testify on SB 220, designating February 13th as Aortic Aneurysm Awareness Day in the State of Ohio.

Recently, I had the opportunity to tour the Cleveland Clinic's Aortic Center. During the tour, I witnessed a surgical procedure, and met with medical professionals who specialize in heart and vascular defects. Learning more about the modern medical resources available to our world renowned surgeons was an invaluable and educational experience. Following the tour, due to a personal family history, I requested to undergo a screening for myself. This included a genetics assessment, a physical exam, and a series of varied testing (such as an ultrasound and echocardiogram).

An aortic aneurysm is an abnormal enlargement or bulging of the wall of the aorta. Because it is absent of symptoms, most of those affected are unaware that they have an aortic aneurysm until it is too late. Because of this, an early diagnosis is critical to managing the condition and reducing the risk of rupture, or dissection.

Increasing awareness of aortic aneurysms is of particular importance to me because I lost my father to an aortic aneurysm on February 13th, 15 years ago. My father had a significant impact on my life, that continues to, and always will, influence and guide me each day. His aortic aneurysm ruptured without any signs or symptoms. His passing was devastating to me, and to my family.

Due to the fact that this is a symptomless disease, the designation of an awareness day is an important step in the direction of reducing the rate of harm, and I am hopeful that passage of this bill will encourage more people to get screened, and to talk to their health care professionals about prevention.

Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 220. I appreciate your time and welcome any questions you may have.

