



Proponent– House Bill 135
Tonya Fulwider, Associate Director
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Dear Chairman Lipps, Ranking Member Russo, and Committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 135, sponsored by Representatives Susan Manchester and Thomas West. Mental Health America of Ohio supports this legislation. Copay accumulators negatively impact Ohioans ability to access and afford their medications. This is especially true as we continue to struggle with the pandemic and the resulting economic recession.

Third-party assistance programs such as manufacturer copay cards and non-profit charitable assistance allow people who cannot afford their copayments or coinsurance to access to their medications. Before the emergence of these discriminatory policies, those who had been able to obtain aide had the value of the assistance count toward their deductible and maximum out-of-pocket limit. That is no longer the case.

Assistance programs were especially helpful for individuals enrolled in high deductible health plans in which the participant is required to pay significantly high out-of-pocket costs until the deductible is reached.

Research now shows that people have higher treatment discontinuation since the wide use of copay accumulator policies have been implemented. For individuals living with mental illness, not being able to access their medication can potentially lead to disease progression, relapse, and other adverse events, thereby increasing health care utilization.

We encourage you to pass House Bill 135 to protect Ohioans by limiting the use of copay accumulator adjuster programs.

Thank you,

Tonya Fulwider

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