



John Lepto, RPh
Director of Pharmacy Services, Akron Children's Hospital
Clinical Assistant Professor of Pharmacy Practice, NEOMED

Proponent Testimony, Ohio House Bill 135 (HB 135)
Ohio House Health Committee
March 16, 2021

Dear Chairman Lipps and Members of the House Health Committee:

On behalf of the Akron Children's Hospital clinicians, staff, volunteers and families we serve, I am writing to express our support for Ohio House Bill 135, sponsored by State Representatives West and Manchester.

As a significant provider of pediatric health care services in Ohio, we see thousands of kids each year who are suffering from a serious medical condition that requires prescription drugs to help them survive and thrive. For many of these families, covering the cost of their child's prescription is a constant challenge requiring significant planning and sacrifice. We know that parents are doing everything they can to help their children, which is why we believe HB 135 is such an important piece of legislation to support these families.

Some patients who require high-cost prescription drugs receive copay assistance from a pharmaceutical company or other source that helps to cover the cost of their medication. This support is invaluable to parents whose children need prescription drugs to treat a serious medical condition.

Unfortunately, we are seeing a proliferation of copay accumulator adjuster programs that are reducing the impact of this copay assistance and driving up health care costs for families. Accumulator adjuster programs are an increasingly utilized policy by health plans and pharmacy benefit managers. While they allow the copay assistance to be used at the pharmacy to pay for the cost of a prescription, they do not apply those funds to the patient's deductible. As a result, patients and families must still meet their deductibles after they have exhausted any copay assistance they receive.

HB 135 would prohibit these adjuster programs and require that copay assistance payments be applied to a patient's deductible and maximum out-of-pocket expenses. We believe that as long as families pay their copays when they pick up these essential drugs for their children, the source of the payment should not matter. For patients with high deductible plans who rely on expensive prescription drugs, HB 135 could prevent them from having to spend thousands of dollars to meet their deductibles after they have depleted their copay assistance.

This legislation is important to the families we serve, and we urge your support to reduce the burden of caring for children with serious medical conditions. I respectfully request that this committee favorably report Ohio House Bill 135. On behalf of our patients and families, thank you for the opportunity to share Akron Children's perspective.