PROPONENT TESTIMONY
Ohio HB 37
134th General Assembly
Senate Health Committee

Dear Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Health Committee.

My name is Lily Meienburg from Findlay, Ohio, a freshman at The Ohio State University and I am submitting proponent testimony for Ohio HB 37 as submitted by House Representative Gayle Manning.

I am here today to tell you why it is so important to pass HB 37 now. This is an expansion on HB 188, originally passed in 2015 and well known as Kevin's Law after the addition of the Emergency Prescription Refill Law that was added after Kevin Houdeshell lost his life due to not being able to obtain his life sustaining insulin over a holiday weekend.

HB 37 will expand the emergency refills from 1 to 3 per year, as well as require insurance coverage. This will help get the emergency prescription refill requirements where they should be, strengthening Ohio's Law and helping to further protect those of us who rely on medication for our lives every day.

I was diagnosed as a Type 1 Diabetic when I was only 4 years old. I live in a time where I am fortunate that there is insulin to manage my diabetes and keep me alive. However, I am constantly afraid that I will be somewhere without access to my insulin. I am scared, living on my own for the first time now in my dorm that I am on my own to make sure I have all of my supplies and medications and never run into more than one emergency situation in 12 months. I fear the day I go to refill my prescription and am turned away because the pharmacy doesn't have a new prescription from my doctor and because I dropped a vial and broke it 6 months ago they aren't able to refill my prescription until the doctor returns. This bill would ensure that even if the pharmacy had to fill my prescription once in the past twelve months, I would still be able to get my insulin in the case of an emergency again. Even more importantly, this bill would make sure that I could afford the insulin to keep me alive, as I would be guaranteed to not pay more than my copay regardless of whether the doctor refilled my prescription or the pharmacist did.

Growing up with Diabetes, I know that DKA can be fatal in a very short matter of time. I went 36 hours without insulin when I was 15 years old and was already in DKA. I couldn’t even keep water down and was so dehydrated that they had to start my IV in my jugular vein in order to start an insulin drip and get my sugar under control. It took 2 days in the Pediatric ICU to be well enough to go home. Only 36 hours without insulin is all it took to push me that close to death and the doctor made it clear that I wouldn’t have lived if I had waited much longer to go to the hospital.

The expansion of Kevin’s Law will help prevent these further emergencies that risk lives and cost insurance companies and patients much more than covering our insulin. This is why it is vital to make sure insulin is accessible and affordable to everyone. Many Type 1 Diabetics have to ration their insulin due to the outrageous prices of insulin and the limitations on amounts that insurance will cover. When I was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes in 2007, a vial of insulin was around $30 and now a vial of insulin is almost 10 times that cost. It is absolutely necessary that our insurance companies cover the costs of insulin for Type 1 diabetics, now even more than ever, as families struggle to pay for the medical care they need.

This past year, the pandemic has brought healthcare into the main spotlight and now is the time to improve and enhance Kevin’s Law. It has proven to have a huge impact by the number of states that followed Ohio’s example and passed similar laws. Through the pandemic many pharmacists and patients were aided by the use of Kevin’s Law to obtain the medications they needed. The law has been used and shown to save lives and now we have the chance to do more, to do better, and to do what is necessary.

I started my organization, Type Kind, 3 years ago to help spread awareness of Type 1 Diabetes and other invisible disabilities and help encourage inclusivity and bullying prevention in schools and youth groups. I believe that spreading awareness of Type 1 Diabetes and other diseases will help end misconceptions, helping people realize that there is no cure for Type 1 diabetes and that we rely on a constant supply of insulin to literally keep us alive. I intend to dedicate my career to finding a cure for diabetes through an implantable artificial pancreas, but until I do that, until there is a cure for Type 1 diabetes, we need your help to ensure our health and survival by passing this expansion on Kevin's Law.

Thank you for your time.
Respectfully Lilian Meienburg