



**Proponent House Bill 371 Testimony House Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee  
Erin Gratsch Program Coordinator for Women's Imaging Mercy Health  
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Chairwoman Manchester, Vice Chairman Cutrona, Ranking Member Liston, and Members of the House Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on HB 371.

My name is Erin Gratsch and I serve as the Program Coordinator for Women's Imaging at Mercy Health in Cincinnati. While Mercy Health has hospitals and other services in many regions of the state, I am also speaking today on behalf of myself, as a patient advocate, for my Pink Sisters here with me today, and for all the women who reside in the State of Ohio.

I am an accomplished marathon runner, triathlete and a 5-year breast cancer survivor. In 2016, I was 45 and in the best shape of my life and had just run the Boston Marathon. Two weeks later, I ran the Flying Pig Marathon. The following week, I was having a routine mammogram and was asked if I wanted the 2D or 3D mammogram. I was told by the technologist that the 3D was the better exam, but she couldn't guarantee my insurance would cover it and, if not, I might pay up to \$100 out of pocket. She said a 3-D mammogram is recommended when patients are told they have dense breast tissue. I couldn't remember my doctor telling me that, and I had no family history of breast cancer.

I was put on the spot to make the financial decision for the better exam. Luckily, I opted for the 3D exam. My results indicated that my breasts are heterogeneously dense, which may obscure small masses. It also stated I had loosely grouped calcifications. Further testing confirmed I had grade 3, Triple Hormone Negative Breast Cancer which was growing at a fast rate and is one of the deadliest forms of breast cancer. Because I had a 3D mammogram, the cancer was found early, which gave me a 95% survival rate and spared me from having chemotherapy.

Since my diagnosis, I have raised over \$20,000 for women who cannot afford mammograms and for the Pink Ribbon Girls. I changed my profession and now work for Mercy Health as the Program Coordinator for Women's Imaging. Every day I must ask patients if they want the 2D or 3D mammogram. I explain to them that a 3D mammogram has a "layer-by-layer" view of the breast. Images are clearer and more detailed. Insurance programs may cover all, some, or none of a 3D mammogram. It is up to the patient to call ahead to see if their insurance covers the cost. If not, the patient may have to spend up to \$100 out of pocket.



We often hear the following from patients:

- I forgot to call to see if it was covered.
- *I called the insurance and I was on hold forever.*
- *I will opt for the service that's covered.*
- I can't afford it.
- I have never had any problems.
- I don't have any family history.

It is very hard for me to look into a patient's eyes when I have to explain to her she that has to pay more for the 3D mammogram than the woman before or after her, knowing in the back of my mind it could save her life.

3D mammograms should be made available at the same cost for all women ... regardless of their economic, social, or ethnic backgrounds. While I will continue to advocate and educate, the passage of this bill will take away the burden of women having to make choices between their health and their finances ... a choice that could ultimately save their lives. It did mine.

Thank you so much for your time.