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Proponent Testimony, Ohio House Bill 135 (HB 135)
Ohio Senate Health Committee
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Dear Chairman Huffman, Vice-Chair Antani, Ranking Member Antonio and Members of the Senate Health Committee—

On behalf of the clinicians, staff, and volunteers of Akron Children's Hospital, and the 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 services in Ohio, we see thousands of kids each year who have a serious medical condition and require prescription drugs to survive and thrive. For many of these families, covering the cost of their child's prescription is a challenge that requires significant planning and sacrifice. We know that parents are doing everything they can, which is why we believe HB 135 is 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 to help cover the cost of a drug. This support is invaluable to parents whose children require a prescription drug for a serious medical condition.

Unfortunately, we are seeing a proliferation of copay accumulator adjuster programs that reduce the impact of copay assistance and drive up costs for patients. Accumulator adjuster programs are an increasingly utilized policy by health plans and PBM's that allow copay assistance to be used at the pharmacy to pay for cost of a prescription, but do not apply those funds to the patient's deductible. As a result, patient's and families must still meet their deductible after they exhaust their copay assistance.

HB 135 would prohibit these adjuster programs and require copay assistance payments to be applied to a patient's deductible and max out-of-pocket expense. So long as patients pay their copays when they pick up their drugs, the source of the payment shouldn't matter. For patients with a high deductible plan who rely on expensive prescription drugs, HB 135 could be the difference between spending thousands to meet the deductible after a copay assistance card is depleted.

This legislation is, not only, important to the families we serve but to families all across Ohio and we urge your support. Thank you for the opportunity to share Akron Children's perspective. I respectfully request that this committee favorably report Ohio House Bill 135.