

Good morning, Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Ohio Senate Health Committee

My name is Julie Turner and I live in Tipp City, Ohio. I am thrilled to tell you that I am a 47-year stage III cancer survivor, diagnosed with Hodgkin's disease during my senior year in high school. It was a dark time in my life, but I was fortunate to receive cutting edge medical treatment through the Ohio State University Medical Center, unending love and support from my family and the American Cancer Society on my side to wage war on cancer. Treatment regimens were crude in 1975, but by God's grace, MOPP chemotherapy and total nodal radiation I am alive today.

I went on with my life, but it was not long before I realized the treatments that saved my life would haunt me for the rest of my life. The most impactful was my ability to bear children was gone. With the removal of my spleen, I would suffer with an ongoing compromised immune system. I have a heart valve issues and my bones have progressively weakened with age. I work hard to maintain my health, but I depend on a watchful eye of a great medical team.

While employed in public school systems, I had good medical insurance that covered most of my care. But at retirement, I transferred to a bridge insurance plan that would cover me until I became eligible for Medicare. I found out during that first year of retirement that this new insurance plan did not cover the semi-annual injections of bone strengthening medication that I had been receiving, as I was billed for more than \$6,000 for one injection. So, my doctor prescribed a different medication that would prove, after two years, was not keeping pace with that first medication. In fact, I was informed after my first bi-annual DEXA scan on this new drug that I had actually lost 1.7% of my bone density.

Bone density may not seem a significant issue when I just told you I survived cancer, but I am sure several of you are parents and grandparents. Without medication, there could come a time when I would no longer be able to pick up and play with my grandchildren.

Knowing that bone strength is crucial to moving forward, my doctor and I made the decision to go back on the semi-annual injections of the costly first medication that had proven to help me maintain bone strength. My doctor's staff suggested I reach out to the manufacturer of that medication to see if I could secure financial assistance. After answering "NO" to their one question... "do you receive state and/or federal assistance," I received a \$1,500 debit card to be used on a calendar year basis to be used to offset the cost of the medication.

Unfortunately, nearing the end of that first year, I realized the \$1,500 manufacturer assistance did not count toward my annual out-of-pocket maximum. I was outraged to learn that the manufacturer received their payment, the insurance company received their payment and the only person hurt due to the co-pay accumulator exclusion was ME. I have been a volunteer for the American Cancer Society and the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network for many, many years as it is my way to pay it forward for my life-saving treatments. I have told my story to help others benefit from research breakthroughs, public policy to help those fighting the cancer beast, smoke-free laws and tobacco tax to keep folks safe, but now I come to you on my behalf. I also speak on behalf of other Ohioans who do not know about or understand this particular exclusion and unknowingly pay their medical bills. I am an ordinary person with little medical knowledge other than my own experiences and I need your help. Please move HB135 out of committee and to the Senate floor. The House UNANIMOUSLY voted in favor of HB 135 last spring and I believe knowing how Ohioans are negatively affected, the Ohio Senate will follow suit.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of HB 135.

Sincerely,
Julie Turner, ACS CAN volunteer
Tipp City, Ohio