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Proponent Testimony of HB:382

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Dear Representative Brown, and Members of the Ohio House,

Thank you for allowing me an opportunity to convey the importance of the legislation on The Prescription Drug Reader for Visually Impaired Patients HB382.

As a former employee of the Social Security Administration, Medical Mutual of Ohio Insurance Company and a Nonprofit that counseled persons with disabilities and seniors; as well as living in Ohio as a blind person, HB:382 is vitally necessary that will provide equal access to the printed word on prescription labels. Our population is increasingly growing and often diagnosed with visual impairment and blindness. As you are also aware, the “Baby Boomers” are significantly growing in numbers by year to date with various related eye disorders including Diabetic Retinopathy, Glaucoma and Macular Degeneration. Therefore, having an opportunity to keep independence and privacy with the ability to understand and administer medication in the comfort of our home is a win-win for us and those who may not have the point in time to properly assist.

HB:382 will stipulate that “all consumers need access to the dosage, instructions, side-effects, contra-indications, and emergency/refill phone numbers provided by the legal label. Requiring the provision of accessible prescription labels would reduce the detrimental health consequences of medication errors and improve the safety and medication adherence of those with vision loss and print disabilities.”

I encourage you to highly consider and reconsider the importance of this bill; that will provide an overwhelming positive and helpful accommodation that offers print disabled and blind individuals an opportunity to have access to the printed word on their prescription bottles, which has specified instructions. On the other hand, without the passing of HB:382, it will not only lead to dependability, inaccessibility and noncompliance with doctor’s orders, but harmful results as well.

Consequently, there are several types of accessible devices that offers such an accommodation for the blind. Just having one of them at all local pharmacies can be quite helpful. Additionally, having your support, understanding and empathy for equal access for this population means that we as disabled constituents are just as important as the so call “nondisabled citizens” to Ohio State Representatives. Here is a thought to ponder. Imagine that you are blind and are in need of a diabetic medication. However, this drug is new and understanding the side-effects is necessary, because of allergies.

So, you call your primary care physician, but the answering machine comes on. Then, you call a relative, but they are not available until late night. Your emotions are high with anxiety, because you need your medication on time. For the last months, the previous drug hasn't been effective in lowering your soaring levels. No one has provided you with a way to get the printed instructions in order for you to be informed of what is on that particular label. However, if you had one of the accessible devices for the blind, such as ScripTalk, your pharmacist would have worked along with this company to ensure accessibility of the printed word on the label; that has an audible output. Thus, it would speak everything on the label from dosage to warnings to the name of the pharmaceutical company. You would put the pill bottle on the device and push a button, then it would talk. Yes! It is that simple.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB:382. I am looking forward to this bill passing in Ohio; which will be life altering with positive results honoring those with print disabilities and the blind equal, and yet critical access.