

Testimony of Maddy Katz
Substitute House Bill 33
Senate Medicaid Committee
May 11, 2023

Chairman Romanchuk, Vice Chairman Wilson, Ranking Member Ingram and members of the committee, my name is Maddy Katz and I am here to testify as a proponent for the language contained within Substitute House Bill 33 that requires the Ohio Department of Medicaid to cover the treatment of obesity.

Being overweight is one of the hardest things I deal with. It impacts my physical health and mental health in big ways every single day. My kidneys are impacted. My blood sugar level inches up, I can't keep up and I feel bullied, self-conscious, and anxious about my appearance.

I wasn't always heavy. I took medication when I was younger for many years to manage a mood disorder. Unfortunately, it reset my body weight and I've continued to gain weight each year no matter what I eat or how much I exercise. This fall, under the care of Dr. Scott Butsch at The Cleveland Clinic, I began taking an injectable to help lose weight. So far, I've lost more than 30 pounds. It's the only time in my life that the scale is moving in the right direction. I'm determined to keep losing more because I know I will be healthier.

Every one of my doctors have seen the changes since I started losing weight. I'm more confident. I feel better. I'm tracking my steps and workouts. I have a new job. The progress is slow, but it's working!

My mom and dad are paying for the medication because my Medicaid won't cover it. But it's very expensive and very stressful. My mom has been spending so much time fighting this. But our appeal was denied. I don't understand it. I think obesity is like any other illness that is treated with meds. And in the long run, these medications will help me get to a healthy weight and prevent lots of other health problems that come with being overweight. Over time, that means far fewer medical bills submitted to Medicaid. How can this be a bad thing?

My life is better because of anti-obesity medication. I need them. But my parents won't be able to afford it forever. I worry about that a lot. I am sure there are lots of other people in Ohio on Medicaid that have this same problem. Please consider all of us when you review this language.

Thank you for your time and attention.