

Proponent Testimony – HB 33, Prostate Cancer Screening

Chairman Lampton, Vice Chair Craig, Ranking Member Tims, and members of the House Insurance Committee,

Cancer has touched nearly every Ohio family, including mine.

My name is Stephanie Mueller from Medina, and I am here today as a daughter, a volunteer with the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, and a lifelong Ohioan whose life was forever changed when my dad was diagnosed with prostate cancer twelve years ago. His journey is what inspired me to become a passionate advocate for cancer awareness and early detection.

Thanks to early detection, my dad was diagnosed at a stage when treatment options were available—and effective. He is now a 12-year survivor. But I often think about what could have happened if he hadn't been screened when he was. That test, which for many is financially out of reach, gave our family the most precious gift: more time. More birthdays. More holidays. More memories.

Not every Ohioan is that fortunate. Out-of-pocket costs—even as little as \$20—can be a real barrier for high-risk men. That shouldn't be the case when we know that early detection is not only lifesaving but cost-saving.

Prostate cancer survival rates are much higher when the disease is caught early, yet recent years have shown a troubling increase in advanced prostate cancer diagnoses. Late-stage prostate cancer is not only more difficult to treat—it's also significantly more expensive, and outcomes are far worse.

Despite clinical guidelines recommending PSA testing for high-risk men, many still avoid or delay screening due to cost. In fact, even a \$15 copay can be enough to discourage someone from getting tested. And many men don't realize that avoiding a \$15 test could mean a bill for tens of thousands of dollars later—or worse, the loss of their life.

Late-stage prostate cancer diagnoses have increased by 42% over the past decade. In Ohio, the percentage of men over 40 receiving screenings dropped from 54.4% in 2010 to just 32% in 2020. HB 33 offers a critical solution by requiring insurance coverage for evidence-based prostate cancer screening, such as the PSA test, without cost-sharing for high-risk men. These include men over 40 with a family history of prostate cancer and African American men—groups with a higher risk of developing aggressive disease.

I've spent the last 12 years working to raise awareness about prostate cancer. I've served as a local race director, fundraiser, and national advocate. I've met countless men and families whose lives have been deeply impacted by this disease, and sadly, I've also met too many who didn't have the same outcome as my dad—often because they didn't have access to screening or waited too long.

Passing HB 33 could increase screening rates in Ohio by 25%, saving an estimated 118 lives and more than \$139 million over the next 26 years. That's not just cost-effective—it's compassionate. It's proactive. It's smart policy.

We also need to consider the groups most at risk. Black men and men with a family history of prostate cancer are significantly more likely to be diagnosed—and diagnosed younger. Veterans and first responders are also impacted at higher rates. These men serve our communities. They deserve our support in return.

As someone who has walked this path with a loved one, I'm urging you—please vote yes on HB 33. Let's remove the financial barriers to PSA screenings so more Ohio families can share in the same hope and relief that early detection brought to mine.

Thank you for your time and for considering this critical legislation that could save lives—giving our fathers, brothers, husbands, and sons the chance to build more memories with the people who love them.