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State Senator

15th District

Sponsor Testimony for Senate Bill 18

Ohio Senate Health Committee

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Thank you, Chair Huffman, Vice-Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Liston, and other members of the Senate Health Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify about Senate Bill 18. I am honored to bring forth this monumental legislation with my joint sponsor, Senator Reynolds.

Cardiovascular diseases, or CVD's as they are more commonly called, are illnesses that affect the heart and blood vessels of the body such as coronary artery disease, heart failure, a heart attack, among other conditions. **According to the World Health Organization**, cardiovascular diseases are the leading cause of death among people globally, taking the lives of 17.9 million people each year.¹ More than four out of five cardiovascular disease deaths are caused by heart attacks and strokes, with one third of these deaths occurring in people under 70 years old.² The Ohio Department of Health found that heart disease is "the leading cause of death in Ohio and in the Unites States."³ Heart disease in Ohio has killed more than 30,000 people in 2022 and our state had the 12 highest rate of deaths from heart disease in the nation."⁴

The occurrence of heart disease is the most common among older Ohioans with lower incomes and education levels and Black Ohioans had "an 19% higher age adjusted heart disease death rate in 2022 compared to White Ohioans."⁵ Even

¹ "Cardiovascular diseases", World Health Organization, accessed February 7th, 2025, <https://www.scribbr.com/frequently-asked-questions/cite-source-with-no-author-chicago-style/>.

² See note 1 above.

³ "Heart Disease", Ohio Department of Health, accessed February 7th, 2025, <https://odh.ohio.gov/know-our-programs/heart-disease/heart-disease#:~:text=In%202022%2C%205.6%25%20of%20adults,had%20suffered%20a%20heart%20attack.>

⁴ See note 3 above.

⁵ See note 3 above.

though heart disease, Black men had the highest rate of heart disease death in the state in 2022 as well.

This is an issue that affects all Ohioans, particularly communities of color and those who do not have equitable access to healthcare.

Because this condition takes affects a great number of people, it is critical to recognize the risk factors of the disease to try and prevent it before it starts. Risk factors for cardiovascular disease include an unhealthy diet, obesity or being overweight, tobacco use, and excessive use of alcohol.⁶ These behaviors can lead to high blood pressure, elevated blood glucose, and heightened blood lipids.⁷

Prevention measures for these diseases are things that people can incorporate into their daily routines such as tobacco cessation, eating more fruits and vegetables, limiting salt intake, and exercising regularly. While cardiovascular disease can decrease quality of life and greatly affect the health for Ohioans, it also contributes to higher healthcare costs,⁸ which can lead to long term financial ramifications for already low-income families.

Cardiovascular health is essential for all Ohioans to live strong and healthy lives. Making February 14th “Cardiovascular Health Awareness Day” will educate the public on the importance of prevention, warning signs, and how vital it is to keep your heart healthy. Again, I extend my thanks to my joint sponsor, Senator Reynolds for bringing forth this life-saving legislation. Thank you, Chairman Huffman and members of the Senate Health Committee, for giving me the opportunity to testify today. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

⁶ See note 1 above.

⁷ See note 1 above.

⁸ See note 3 above.