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Chairman Huffman, Vice-Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Liston and members of the Senate Health Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Senate Bill 20 (“SB 20”), which will designate the first week of May as “Ohio Stroke Awareness Week”. Stroke is the number one cause of disability and the fifth leading cause of mortality in the United States. Despite these facts, stroke is primarily preventable and increasing public awareness is crucial to improving patient outcomes.

Founded in 1866, University Hospitals Health System serves the needs of patients through an integrated network of more than 20 hospitals (including five joint ventures), more than 50 health centers and outpatient facilities, and over 200 physician offices in 16 counties throughout northern Ohio. The board-certified stroke specialists at University Hospitals Comprehensive Stroke Center include vascular neurologists, neurosurgeons, neuro-critical care intensivists, and interventional specialists, working together to combine their training and skill to handle the most complex neurovascular disorders. The Comprehensive Stroke Center at University Hospitals Neurological Institute in Cleveland, Ohio has a legacy of innovation in advancing care protocols and overall excellence in outcomes. The center is recognized for several stroke care advances, including:

- Endovascular Therapy: University Hospitals is a world leader in stroke care and innovation, leading groundbreaking clinical research trials (SELECT 2 & SELECT LATE) across the world to advance stroke treatment and improve patient outcomes.
- Thrombolytic or “clot-busting therapy” for acute ischemic stroke: University Hospitals was one of first in the nation to transition to Tenecteplase, a novel thrombolytic with a strong safety profile and treatment outcomes.
- System Stroke Program: Launched in 2008 and continues to improve care by standardizing stroke protocols and increasing the use of IV-thrombolysis. Our health network shares data and best practices across its entire system ensuring that the same high level of stroke care is delivered, regardless of location.
- Coverdell National Stroke Registry: Northeast Ohio was the first to collect regional data in 2000 and has continued ever since.

Every second matters when your loved one is having a stroke. Time equals brain. These are life and death situations that require a patient to be properly assessed and stabilized at the closest hospital. Strokes can happen to anyone, at any age. When you spot a stroke warning sign, BEFAST. Recognizing the stroke warning signs and calling 911 immediately may make the difference between a strong recovery or long-term disability, survival or death.

Consequently, having a stroke puts you at a higher risk for a second one, however, stroke survivors have the power to reduce their risk for having another stroke. There are things you can do to reduce

your risk, starting with identifying what caused your stroke and uncovering all of your personal risk factors. Up to 80% of strokes may be prevented by:

- Managing blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes
- Making healthy lifestyle choices (such as eating a healthy diet, being physically active, not smoking and limiting alcohol)
- Taking medications as recommended by your doctor (after an ischemic stroke or TIA, most patients will be prescribed an antiplatelet or anticoagulant therapy)

Our hope with this legislation is that it can raise awareness of strokes while educating the public on how to spot strokes, how to act if someone is having a stroke, and how to prevent strokes. Chairman Huffman, Vice-Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the Senate Health Committee for this opportunity to provide feedback on this important legislation.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Sarraj', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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