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Chairman Romanchuk, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Liston, and Members of the Committee.

I am writing to express my strong support for increasing Medicaid reimbursement for Vagus Nerve Stimulation (VNS) Therapy in Ohio. As a Doctor of Nursing Practice in neurology, I have firsthand experience treating patients with Drug-Resistant Epilepsy (DRE) and understand the significant challenges they face due to repeated antiseizure medication (ASM) failures, co-morbidities, and diminished quality of life.

Throughout my 19 years of practice, I have witnessed the profound impact of DRE on both patients and their caregivers. The burden extends far beyond seizure frequency, affecting cognitive function, mental health, and daily activities. Many of these individuals rely on government assistance for their healthcare needs, yet they struggle to access vital therapies due to inadequate reimbursement policies.

In Youngstown, the absence of an implanting institution has left DRE patients with little or no access to specialized care, forcing them to travel long distances or forgo treatment altogether.

VNS Therapy has been clinically proven to improve seizure control, reduce co-morbidities, and enhance overall quality of life for implanted patients. Beyond patient well-being, the economic benefits of VNS Therapy are significant, reducing emergency department visits, hospital admissions, and overall healthcare expenditures. In my own practice, I have seen patients regain independence, experience fewer seizures, and decrease their reliance on costly healthcare services following VNS implantation.

I urge you to support increased and equitable Medicaid reimbursement for VNS Therapy to ensure that DRE patients in Ohio have access to this life-changing treatment. By doing so, we can enhance patient outcomes, alleviate caregiver burdens, and reduce long-term healthcare costs for our state.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further and provide any additional information that may be helpful. Please feel free to contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jesse V McClain IV DNP, APRN