

Dear Chairman, Romanchuk, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the Senate Medicaid Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on House Bill 96. My name is Danielle Becker, MD, MS. I am an Adult Epileptologist and the Division Director of Epilepsy and Associate Professor of Neurology at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center. I manage a wide variety of patients with epilepsy and am well versed in the surgical and neuromodulation management for these patients. My research interests involve the assessment and management of response to implanted neurostimulation devices in subjects with epilepsy and I am the Director of Neuromodulation at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center.

I am writing in support of Neuromodulation and specifically the Vagal Nerve Stimulator (VNS) for our epilepsy patients in the state of Ohio. 3.5 million people in the US have epilepsy and over 1 million of those patients continue to have seizures despite trying two or more anti-seizure medications at adequate doses. These patients are at risk of injury, hospitalization, and even death with uncontrolled seizures. Once patients fail two medications, it is thought the likelihood of becoming seizure free with another medication is less than 5%. This is the time when we start talking about non-pharmacologic options and specifically neuromodulation. The VNS has been on the market for over 25 years and has treated over 150,000 patients worldwide. It provides our patients with reduction in seizure frequency and severity, reduction in time of the seizure and improvement in recovery from the seizures. I have patients that used to take days to recover from a seizure and now can get back to living within 30 minutes. Within the first year of implantation, 41% of patients will have over an 80% reduction in seizure frequency. Their risk of sudden unexpected death in epilepsy (SUDEP) is also markedly reduced. The VNS is also approved by the FDA to treat depression, which > 60% of our drug-resistant epilepsy patients suffer from. Thus, I write you today in support of House Bill 96 and the need for access to VNS as a treatment option for all drug-resistant epilepsy patients, and especially those who are Medicaid recipients in Ohio.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Danielle Becker".

Danielle Becker, MD, MS, FAES
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Associate Professor of Neurology
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