

Proponent Testimony on HB 37

Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo, thank you for the opportunity to share proponent testimony on HB 37. My name is Cassandra Freeland, and five years ago this week my son Adam was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes. Since then, I have been involved in diabetes advocacy.

In 2015, Ohio passed an emergency prescription refill law (HB 188) called Kevin's Law. It was named for Kevin Houdeshell, who lost his life because he was unable to refill his insulin prescription on a holiday weekend. His pharmacist could not reach his doctor and could not fill the prescription as a result. Since Ohio passed Kevin's law, 20 other states have done the same and four are currently considering it, thanks to the tireless efforts of his family who do not want this tragedy for anyone else.

HB 37 would expand that emergency prescription refill law to allow for 3 emergency refills per year rather than one. It would also require insurance companies to cover that emergency refill. Not only is this the right thing to do, but it is also more cost effective than the alternative. An ER visit to stabilize blood sugars costs \$10,000 on average.

Where insulin is concerned there are several reasons someone may need an emergency refill, including a broken vial, insulin that was left in the heat (during power outages, for example), a bad vial (yes, this happens), needing more insulin than usual due to illness or stress, insulin forgotten at home or in a hotel room (as it is often kept in the refrigerator) and equipment failures that lead to losing the insulin in the reservoir of an insulin pump.

It is necessary for insurance to cover this because of the outrageous cost of insulin. Since 2009, the cost of insulin has gone from \$40 a vial to around \$300 a vial with no change in the product. Research indicates that as much as 70% of the cost of insulin is made up of pharmacy benefit manager rebates. Net profits on insulin have increased only slightly. ["Walmart" insulin is not the answer](#)...it is an older version of "human" insulin that that was once the best option but has not been for nearly 20 years. Many people do not know how to accurately dose it.

It is worth mentioning that insulin is available over the counter in Canada for less than \$30 a vial. It is unconscionable that patients still struggle to obtain their insulin with our advanced health care system. I urge you to pass HB 37 to make it easier for them to obtain insulin in emergency situations.

Sincerely,

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