

## 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 Nicole Tucker White, and my son, Henry, was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes at age 9, in September 2016.

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 others to experience a similar, heart-wrenching tragedy.

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.

I remember our first trip out of town after our son was diagnosed. It was thanksgiving, and we were still feeling overwhelmed by the diagnosis, and all the added medications, tools and even just thought processes we needed to manage Henry's diabetes. Having Type 1 Diabetes is heavy. There are no days off, there is no meal that you can "just forget about," or indulge in mindlessly. Every morsel, every carbohydrate has to be counted, the calculations must be tallied, current blood sugar has to be measured and factored into the equation. Consequently, I had done my calculations in advance, obtaining the recipes and figuring carb counts, adding some new, lower carb recipes to the Thanksgiving table. We packed our things – our suitcases for our three children, our dog bowls and dog food and the insulin Henry takes with his meals. However, when we got to my parents in Ft. Wayne, I realized I had forgotten his basal insulin, which is one injection per day to ensure he doesn't go into Diabetic Ketoacidosis. I felt demoralized, like the worst mother ever!

Thankfully, I called our son's endocrinologist, who graciously called in an emergency prescription and we were able to get our son what he needed and enjoy the holiday together. Since that first holiday, we have forgotten insulin or needles on numerous other occasions when we have traveled. I can't imagine not having Kevin's Law to help us in our desperate time of need. We're human. We get busy, we are overwhelmed, and we forget. Or sometimes, equipment malfunctions, vials break...it's life. And yet, death will absolutely come for those with Type 1 Diabetes who don't have access to their insulin, no matter the reason. It seems overly dramatic. I wish it were. But it's fact. So, I urge you to expand HB 37 so that we can forget and be human more than just our allotted one time per year.

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 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. Please know that

“Walmart” insulin is not the answer...it is an older version of insulin that was once the best option but has not been for nearly 20 years. Many people do not know how to accurately dose it.

I urge you to pass HB 37 to make it easier for all people with diabetes, Type 1 or 2, to obtain insulin in emergency situations.

Most Sincerely,

Nicole Tucker White