

Saturday, March 26, 2022

Dear Chairman Brinkman, Vice Chairman Lampton, and Ranking Member Miranda:

After Greetings,

My name is Ali Benmerzouga, I live in North Olmsted, Ohio. I, like many blind adults, live more or less independently with minimal assistance from my wife, kids, friends and colleagues. I consider myself an expert in handling my medications but from time to time I really face hurdles and impasses and get very frustrated and helpless. Before going into explaining myself and the problems I face from time to time, I would like to thank you for including H.B. 448 in the next meeting and for giving me and all blind Ohioans the chance to submit a written proponent testimony in favor of H.B. 448.

Here are the hurdles/dead ends/impasses/dangers I face from time to time and I believe many blind Ohioans do face them too!

1: Medication Refill time:

I cannot read the medication name and refill time until the medication container is more or less empty. I tried to over come that by placing my medications on an automatic refill but the pharmacy system does not inform me when I am out of refills in order to get in touch with my primary doctor and ask for new prescriptions/more refills. This flaw/difficulty, sometimes causes me to miss a couple of days from taking my medicines related to my health issues. This is not right for my health and may have some risk/Danger.

2: Calling my Pharmacy for Refills:

They always ask me for the name and code of the medication that I would like to refill and if no one is near me or present in the house I cannot provide such information and may need to delay my call till someone from my family is around to kindly help me with that. My independence and privacy are lost and possibly a delay in getting my medication!

3: Sometimes I need some Immediate Help with my medications:

Although I have been taking medications for a long time and know them by heart in terms of size, shape, dose and even smell, sometimes I cannot find out what is this or what is that and try to ask for an immediate help from anyone in the house and find out that I am home alone. In that case I'll find myself delaying taking that specific medication until later. Another risk/danger!

4: Side Effects:

I have never been able to know or read the side effects of my medication and just believe in what I have been told. How about that?

As a blind Ohioan, I hope the above four items clearly show you the little information we are accessing, the risk we are taking, the danger we are facing and the loss of independence and privacy that I am and most blind Ohioans are going through on a daily basis when handling our medications.

Again, thank you for your support of HB 448, and for believing that blind people have the right to independently identify and administer their own medications and keep living the life they want.

Sincerely,

Ali Benmerzouga
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