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Senate Bill 11 – Proponent Testimony
Ohio Senate Health Committee

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Senate Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 11.

With over 20 years of experience as a practicing pediatric cardiologist, I have first-hand knowledge of the impact of a congenital heart defect diagnosis on patients and their families. My first exposure to congenital heart disease was during my medical school and pediatric residency training. While the complexity and challenging nature of the field of pediatric cardiology initially appealed to me, it was my interactions with children and their families that has maintained my passion for the field. I was recently contacted by a family in Dallas, Texas regarding their daughter, a former patient of mine that I cared for ~20 years ago, who was born with heart disease. She had recently passed away at 23 years of age and they were calling to say “thank you” as their daughter had lived longer than they had expected. This conversation served as an important reminder that while there have been significant medical advancements which have allowed babies born with congenital heart disease to live to become young adults, much more was needed.

As an academic pediatric cardiologist, I have been on faculty at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas and The Ohio State University College of Medicine. Currently, I serve as the Director of the Center for Cardiovascular Research in the Abigail Wexner Research Institute and am a pediatric cardiologist in the Heart Center at Nationwide Children's Hospital. In addition, I am a tenured Professor of Pediatrics (Division of Pediatric Cardiology) and hold an adjunct appointment in the Department of Molecular Genetics at The Ohio State University. I am a Fellow of the American Heart Association (AHA) and a member of the AHA Council - Lifelong Congenital Heart Disease and Heart Health in the Young (Young Hearts). I currently serve on the AHA Congenital Cardiac Defects National Committee and have served on numerous American Heart Association committees in the past. I graduated from Sidney Kimmel Medical College (M.D., '94) and completed my pediatric residency training at Nationwide Children's Hospital (formerly Columbus Children's Hospital) in 1997. This was followed by fellowships in clinical pediatric cardiology and cardiovascular development and genetics research at Children's Medical Center Dallas and University of Texas Southwestern, respectively. The impetus for my research interest was to understand why congenital heart defects occur with the ultimate goal of discovering novel preventative or treatment strategies for this disease. I returned to Columbus, Ohio in 2009 to not only serve the patients in the community as a pediatric cardiologist but also to expand my cardiovascular research program focused on congenital heart defects.

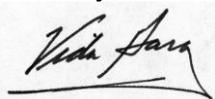
Over the course of my training and career, I have witnessed the significant improvements in the care of infants and children afflicted by congenital heart defects. Even so, congenital heart disease continues to still have a significant impact on affected infants and children and their families. I have provided some statistics about congenital heart defects in the United States and Ohio which demonstrate the importance of raising awareness of this disease.

- Most common birth defect affecting ~1 out of every 100 babies born each year in the United States, which equates to ~40,000 children each year or 1 child every 15 minutes

- In Ohio, this translates to ~1,300 babies with a congenital heart defect being born each year
- 25% of babies born with a congenital heart defect will need surgical or catheter-based intervention in the first year of life to survive
- In Ohio, it is estimated ~125 infant deaths each year are attributed to congenital heart defects
- Medical and surgical advancements have resulted in a nearly 40% reduction in mortality in the United States since 1999 and now over 85% of babies born with congenital heart disease live to at least 18 years of age
- This success has led to >2 million children and adults are living with congenital heart defects in the United States
- Many infants, children and adults with congenital heart disease are not cured with one surgery. They often face a life-long risk of health problems including difficulty with exercise, heart rhythm problems, heart failure, sudden cardiac arrest or stroke.
- Hospital costs for patients with a congenital heart defect exceeded \$5.6 billion in 2009
- Congenital heart defect research is grossly underfunded relative to the prevalence of other childhood diseases, which have higher levels of public awareness (e.g. cystic fibrosis occurs in 1 in 3,000 live births and childhood cancer is diagnosed in 1 in 6,250 children)
- The cause of the majority of congenital heart defects is unknown and more research is needed.

The American Heart Association would respectfully ask this committee to support Senate Bill 11. It is through legislation like this that the public will become increasingly aware about this disease, which affects an increasing number of residents in Ohio and this country. With greater awareness, we hope that there will be increased research efforts to better understand and treat congenital heart defects and provide resources for infant, children and adult congenital heart disease survivors and their families.

Sincerely,



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