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Ohio Senate Health Committee  
Supporting SB 43 – March 3, 2021

Chair Huffman, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Ohio Senate Health Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony regarding Senate Bill 43 introduced by Senator Tim Schaffer. This bill would designate the month of July as Sarcoma Awareness Month.

As a society, we generally think of cancer as a disease of aging adults. Unfortunately, children, adolescents, and young adults are also not infrequently diagnosed with cancer, including a variety of types of sarcoma. In fact, despite the progress we've experienced over the past 50 years with new treatments, cancer remains the #1 cause of death due to disease in children. The diagnosis of sarcoma spans the ages, with a soft tissue sarcoma called rhabdomyosarcoma being the most common type in young children, and bone sarcomas (osteosarcoma, Ewing sarcoma) being the most common type in adolescents and young adults. Treatment for these conditions frequently requires disfiguring surgery, damaging irradiation, and nauseous chemotherapy. Those who are fortunate to survive often have life-long side effects, including growth and hormonal deficiencies, chronic pain, psychosocial distress, physical impairments and fear of treatment-induced secondary cancers. Furthermore, for unknown reasons, survival rates for those diagnosed as adolescents or young adults (defined as ages 15-39 years old) is inferior to those diagnosed at other ages with the same type of sarcoma. Thus, sarcoma remains an unmet medical need amongst young people.

The designation of July as Sarcoma Awareness Month is important for us to make faster progress in combating sarcoma. Increased awareness amongst your constituents will empower them both to ease suffering for those afflicted and to help scientists and clinicians discover and test new treatments. Armed with accurate information, individuals will be more likely to show compassion to others, increase philanthropy, spur investments in research, encourage and support clinical trials, and be more effective advocates.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of Senate Bill 43. With your help, the faster we will reach the day when all childhood cancer is preventable or curable.