

PROPONENT TESTIMONY

For Ohio HB 37

134th General Assembly

Dear members of the health committee,

I am Justin Funkhouser. I am 18 years old and from Sandusky, Ohio and I will be speaking on behalf of the Be Apart of it Foundation. I am attending John Carroll University and I am a proponent for this bill.

I was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes at the age of 10 years old, forcing a big change in my life that I was neither expecting nor ready for. Being two weeks out of school, there were many new lessons I had to learn to survive with this disease over the years and I am still learning. From the constant struggles of being low to unbearable highs which prevent many activities, the main center that controls it all is disabled and unable to work. My pancreas is unable to produce insulin naturally, so I must use a variety of medical equipment, such as insulin vials, insulin pumps, pump insets, and cartridges. And that's not even including the continuous glucose monitor I use to monitor my blood sugar during the night so I can ensure I get restful sleep. However, the cost of all this essential equipment is insane, costing \$1,500 a month. Most of the cost is from my insulin alone costing \$700, just for the most essential piece. Having to pay \$1,500 is nigh impossible at this stage in my life and considering my financial situation it is a constant struggle for if I may or may not have supplies.

There have been many times where I have run out of continuous glucose monitor sensors and I have had to resort to old equipment such as expired glucose test strips and their shoddy test results, often being 50-100 points away from being accurate when using a testing solution. However, that pales in comparison to how bad it will get if one does not have the proper insulin. Without insulin, the body cannot convert glucose into energy. This leads the body to a predicament called DKA, which can lead to a long-term coma or even death.

Taking this away from a personal standpoint, let us look at this from a more broad view. An article written in 2019 covers the increasing costs of insulin over a year. In 2012, the average cost per year for a diabetic patient was \$2,864. In 2016 however, this has jumped to an astounding \$5,705 per year. The cost increase is almost over double and with many financial burdens such as college tuition and a worldwide pandemic, insulin prices are not manageable for students and even parents to cover. An article published by Forbes states that “Newer versions of insulin retail for between \$175 to \$300 a vial. Most patients with diabetes need at least two or three vials a month, and some require more” (Cohen NP). The prices of the required insulin are already insane. But if we add that to the costs of syringes, blood glucometers, and testing strips the prices only increase. Other countries sell insulin at more reasonable prices. Once again pointing to the article published by Forbes, “The U.S. represents on 15% of the global insulin market but generates nearly 50% of the industry’s revenue” (Cohen NP).

HB 37 would guarantee what diabetics need the most: insulin. It would prevent the worst-case scenario for adults and children alike. Many lives would be saved by the passing of this.

Sincerely,

Justin Funkhouser