November 19, 2019

Ohio House Health Committee

Proponent testimony for HB 214

Submitted by: Christopher Sabine

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Chair Lipps, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Boyd, and members of the Ohio House Health Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of HB 214. My name is Christopher Sabine, and I am secretary of the Cincinnati Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind of Ohio. I am writing to ask the Ohio Health Committee to refer HB 214 to the Full House for a vote. HB 214 will require all retail and mail order pharmacies operating in Ohio to provide all prescription medication labels in a format accessible to Blind consumers, their families and care givers. As a blind person who helps care for my father at home, accessible prescription labels are essential to my ability to enabling my father to receive the care he needs at home.

My father served for four years in Vietnam in the Navy’s Construction Battalion. His unit was part of I Corps and was involved with the Tet Offensive. He received three Purple Hearts and a Bronze Star for his actions.

He was treated in 2012 for an abdominal aortic aneurysm and later diagnosed with severe COPD. He has some other health complications, is generally confined to home and is unable to manage his medications or medical appointments himself.

I currently ensure that Dad’s medications are filled at the VA and help coordinate his medical appointments and have had to interface with the director of my local VA’s pharmacy on several occasions to ensure that he receives adequate doses of his medication. My mother works in retail in the inner city and has irregular hours. She currently dispenses Dad’s medications and has the bulk of the responsibility of ensuring that he takes them as prescribed.

If my mother were ever to suddenly die or become incapacitated, I will need to be able to identify all of Dad’s medications independently and securely and ensure that he receives them in the proper doses. The only way to ensure this is to have the labels of his medications in a format accessible to me as a Blind person. Though the VA provides accessible prescription labels to blinded veterans, passage of this bill is the only guarantee that our local VA pharmacy will provide such labels to me as a Blind caregiver and have the training and resources to offer them for his prescriptions.

I thank all representatives who have sponsored HB 214 and look forward to its passage.