Senate Finance Committee

Senator Matt Dolan, Chair

Senator Dave Burke, Vice Chair

Senator Vernon Sykes, Ranking Minority Member

Tori Geib

Tuesday, May 28, 2019

Please accept my written testimony in support of the amendment to HB 166 relating to the BCCP Medicaid Treatment Program (amending 5166.162).

Mr. Chairman,

[Note fellow patients in the room affected by this issue]

March 6, 2016: I was a year out of college, had a job that I adored, had a wonderful benefits package including a health insurance plan from my employer; the next day my world changed forever.

After a scan and biopsy was done, I was told that I had Breast Cancer, then 2 weeks later after a second opinion I was told that I had Stage 4, Metastatic Breast Cancer that had spread to my spine, crushing on of my vertebrae. I had to go on long term disability from my job, which in turn cancels my benefits package, including my health insurance.

I was 30 years old, with terminal cancer, and no insurance. I did the thing I was told to do: apply for Medicaid. Unfortunately, due to my income made on disability, I made $3 a month too much to receive assistance. I was told by the case worker to apply for the (what she called) breast cancer program, because it looked like they could help. Unfortunately after a call to the program I received more bad news, I was not eligible as a terminal breast cancer patient to receive Medicaid coverage because I had not been preventatively screened under the program due to the fact that I was under age and at the time had insurance.

Because of this ineligibility, I went a year with no insurance and eventually had to file bankruptcy due to the crippling medical debt I was under. If I had an option to be able to enroll under BCCP Medicaid as an income eligible patient in treatment for breast cancer, I could have eliminated the need to have lost all of my savings and forgone ending up in bankruptcy court merely because I wanted to fight to stay alive.

It’s estimated that over 1,700 Ohioans will die from breast cancer this year: As a patient, I’m asking that you please fund the BCCP Program and approve the expanded enrollment option of BCCP so that patients can have access to the care they desperately need without the financial cost burden, which for some could mean life or death.