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Ohio's 15th Senate District

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Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee
Senate Concurrent Resolution 7 Sponsor Testimony
Support Increased Screening of Asian Americans for Type 2 Diabetes
December 3, 2019

Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Huffman, and members of the Senate Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of Senate Concurrent Resolution 7. This legislation urges an increase of screenings for Type 2 diabetes among Asian Americans in Ohio.

Specifically, this resolution asks the Ohio Department of Health to actively encourage the medical community to screen Asian-American patients who have a body mass index of 23, instead of the medical standard of 25. According to the National Institutes of Health, more than half of Asians Americans living with Type 2 diabetes are undiagnosed. Asian Americans are the largest population of undiagnosed diabetics among all racial and ethnic groups.ⁱ Yet, Asian Americans are the least likely racial and ethnic group to receive recommendations for a diabetes screening. Compared to white Americans, Asian Americans are 34% less likely to receive recommendations for screening.ⁱⁱ

This can be attributed to the belief that a person with a BMI under 25 is not at risk for Type 2 diabetes. However, research shows that a BMI of 23 indicates risk for diabetes among people of Asian descent. And, when screened, Asian Americans are much more likely to be diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes despite having a lower mean BMI than any other racial or ethnic group.ⁱⁱⁱ

When untreated, Type 2 diabetes can lead to serious complications, such as kidney damage that could lead to dialysis, eye damage and potential blindness and an increased risk of heart disease and stroke. It is estimated that by lowering BMI indicators for Asian Americans from 25 to 23, we could detect over 4,000 cases of this disease. This would allow for early interventions and save lives.^{iv}

This legislation was brought to our attention by the American Diabetes Association and the Ohio Commission on Minority Health. Our shared goal in passing this resolution is to increase awareness in the medical and Asian-American population about diabetes.

Thank you, Chairman Burke and members of the Health committee, for allowing us to testify on this lifesaving resolution. We will now take any questions the committee has regarding this proposal.

ⁱ <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/more-half-asian-americans-diabetes-are-undiagnosed>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5377880/>

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^{iv} <http://ncapip.org/resources/DiaCare2015Araneta.pdf>