SCR 9 – Proponent Testimony

Ohio Senate Medicaid, Health, and Human Services Committee

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February 5, 2020

Chair Burke, Vice Chair Huffman, and Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Ohio Senate Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee, thank you for allowing Cleveland Clinic to provide proponent testimony for Senate Concurrent Resolution 9, which would designate Cardiac Amyloidosis Recognition Month in the state of Ohio. My name is Kim Bischel, and I am registered nurse at Cleveland Clinic. I specialize in the rare disease cardiac amyloidosis and heart failure.

At the Cleveland Clinic, we have an Amyloidosis Center that is a leader in the diagnosis, treatment, and research of cardiac amyloidosis. We have specialists in our Cancer Center and Sydell and Arnold Miller Family Heart & Vascular Institute that work together to provide the most advanced treatment options for patients with cardiac amyloidosis. U.S. News & World Report consistently names Cleveland Clinic as one of the nation’s top hospitals in its annual “America’s Best Hospitals” survey and has named Cleveland Clinic’s heart program No. 1 in the nation since 1995.

Amyloidosis is a rare disease in which abnormal proteins misfold and cause organ damage. There are many types of amyloidosis but the two most common that often affect the heart, referred to as cardiac amyloidosis, are immunoglobulin light chain (AL) amyloidosis and transthyretin (TTR) amyloidosis. Light chain amyloidosis is caused from a misfolding of proteins produced by the bone marrow. Early diagnosis is required as the mortality rate is less than six months without treatment. Transthyretin amyloidosis is caused from proteins produced by the liver that misfold and cause organ and nerve damage. It is an under-recognized cause of heart failure in older adults.

Cardiac amyloidosis was previously regarded as a rare condition, however with better testing modalities and our aging population, the prevalence is increasing. Early diagnosis is key to survival and improved quality of life. On average, a patient may see four to five providers before amyloidosis is properly diagnosed. There are red flags and signs and symptoms that a patient exhibits that can contribute to early recognition.

The Amyloidosis Center at the Cleveland Clinic is led by co-directors Mazen Hanna, MD, from Cardiovascular Medicine and Jason Valent, MD, from Hematology and Medical Oncology. Together with a specialized team of experts, we explore all options and tailor the most appropriate treatment plan for each patient, taking into consideration the patients’ goals and quality of life. We are dedicated to increasing awareness of this disease and are in support of resolution SCR 9.

The passage of SCR 9 and the designation of a Cardiac Amyloidosis Recognition Month will bring statewide attention to this condition and help Ohioans to be more educated on the symptoms and treatments of cardiac amyloidosis. We thank the sponsor Senator Craig for introducing this bill, and we thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions.