

Proponent Testimony on HB 37

Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo, thank you for the opportunity to share proponent testimony on HB 37. My name is Brice Cerar. I am 18 and am a senior at Saint Ignatius High School in Cleveland, OH. I have been a type one diabetic for four years now and strive to keep my diagnosis as controlled as possible through regulated insulin doses. Many of my closest friends also have type one diabetes and are in need of your help.

In 2015, Ohio passed an emergency prescription refill law (HB 188) called Kevin's Law. It was named for Kevin Houdeshell, who lost his life because he was unable to refill his insulin prescription on a holiday weekend. His pharmacist could not reach his doctor and could not fill the prescription as a result. Since Ohio passed Kevin's law, twenty other states have done the same and four are currently considering it, thanks to the tireless efforts of his family who do not want this tragedy for anyone else.

HB 37 would expand that emergency prescription refill law to allow for three emergency refills per year rather than one. It would also require insurance companies to cover that emergency refill. Not only is this the right thing to do, but it is also more cost effective than the alternative. An ER visit to stabilize blood sugars costs \$10,000 on average.

Where insulin is concerned there are several reasons someone may need an emergency refill, including a broken vial, insulin that was left in the heat (this can happen by leaving it in the car, laying on a beach too long, or even sitting in warm water for too long), a bad vial (where the insulin the vial contains is ineffective in lowering blood sugars causing the recipient to use more quickly), needing more insulin than usual due to illness or stress, insulin forgotten at home or in a hotel room (as it is often kept in the refrigerator), and equipment failures that lead to losing the insulin in the reservoir of an insulin pump. It is because of these reasons that more emergency refills are necessary for those dependent on insulin.

It is necessary for insurance to cover this because of the outrageous cost of insulin. Since 2009, the cost of insulin has gone from \$40 a vial to around \$300 a vial with no change in the product. Research indicates that as much as 70% of the cost of insulin is made up of pharmacy benefit manager rebates. Please know that "Walmart" insulin is not the answer...it is an older version of insulin that was once the best option, but has not been for nearly 20 years. Many people do not know how to accurately dose it.

HB 188 also known as Kevin's Law was passed because people like Kevin Houdeshell, who lost their lives because they were unable to get their necessary medication. While the passing of HB 188 was a large step in the right direction, we have a long way to go to achieve a world where insulin is available to all who need it. I have been fortunate enough these last four years to not have a personal shortage of insulin. However, I know people who have been put in situations where they do not have insulin for days, leading to hospitalizations. Emergency situations can happen at any moment for an insulin dependent person. The lives of so many rely on the

availability of insulin in these emergency situations. Insulin is the drug that keeps me and my fellow 1.6 million type one diabetics alive in America. We all have a right to survive.

I urge you to pass HB 37 to make it easier for them to obtain insulin in emergency situations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Bruce Gerwin". The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive.

Bruce Gerwin