



American Cancer Society
Cancer Action Network
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Ohio House Health Committee, March 9, 2021
Proponent Testimony - House Bill 135
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American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

Chairman Lipps, Ranking Member Russo, and Members of the House Health Committee:

More than 72,000 Ohioans will be diagnosed with cancer this year and most will rely on prescription drugs to treat their disease or manage their symptoms. There are an increasing number of innovative therapies available to cancer patients. In 2020, for example, the FDA approved twenty new cancer therapies¹, but many of these drugs lack a generic equivalent and come at great cost to patients, meaning many patients look for options to lower their costs, including manufacturer's coupons or copay assistance programs.

Copay coupons and copay cards can provide needed financial relief to cancer patients, especially as many Ohioans continue to face financial and health care challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These coupon programs are offered by manufacturers to patients to help offset the cost sharing associated with high cost drugs, and help patients meet their maximum out of pocket limit. Copay assistance programs can give patients access to a lifesaving medication they may otherwise not be able to afford.

A 2019 survey from the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) revealed that seventeen percent of cancer patients reported using a manufacturer's coupon or copay assistance program to help them afford copays for their drugs.² Unfortunately, many insurance plans do not apply the value of these coupons and copay assistance programs to a patient's deductible or out-of-pocket maximum, leaving patients with unaffordable drug bills once the balance of their coupon has been exhausted. This insurance practice harms patients while allowing insurance companies to "double dip" – taking both the patient's dollars and the value of the coupons.

Recently, UnitedHealthCare – one of Ohio's largest health plans – announced that it will no longer count these manufacturer coupons toward a patient's deductible or out-of-pocket maximum. Such a practice can harm both the financial and physical health of Ohio patients. A 2018 study found that a third of cancer patients abandon their prescription at the pharmacy if they face an out-of-pocket cost between \$100 and \$500, which can have severe consequences for a patient's health.³

Ohioans living with cancer deserve to know that their health plans support their access to lifesaving therapies instead of implementing unfair policies that could harm their financial and physical health and that is why ACS CAN SUPPORTS HB 135.

Thank you for your consideration and support of this important legislation. If I can be of help on this matter, please contact me at bryan.hannon@cancer.org.

¹ <https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/oncology/20-cancer-drugs-approved-in-2020.html>

² <https://www.fightcancer.org/policy-resources/survivor-views-surprise-billing-and-prescription-cost-and-coverage-survey-findings>

³ Association of Patient Out-of-Pocket Costs With Prescription Abandonment and Delay in Fills of Novel Oral Anticancer Agents Jalpa A. Doshi, Pengxiang Li, Hairong Huo, Amy R. Pettit, and Katrina A. Armstrong. *Journal of Clinical Oncology* 2018 36:5, 476-482