



**House Bill 135
Proponent Testimony**

Gary Dougherty
Director, State Government Affairs
American Diabetes Association®
House Health Committee
March 9, 2021

Chairman Lipps and Members of the House Health Committee:

My name is Gary Dougherty and I am the Director of State Government Affairs for the American Diabetes Association® (ADA). Unfortunately, I am unable to join this morning; therefore, I am submitting written testimony in support of House Bill 135 which would ensure that the value of co-pay assistance programs is applied toward a patient's deductible.

Increasingly, individuals are using co-pay coupons to help pay for expensive medications that a health care provider prescribes as their best course of treatment. Coupons distributed by the manufacturer are necessary for some patients to purchase life-saving medications, primarily those without generic alternatives. Unfortunately, insurance companies and pharmacy benefit managers often negate this valuable assistance. Whereas health plans will accept the coupon, they may not credit the amount toward the patient's deductible or out-of-pocket maximum.

Diabetes is a serious disease and must be managed according to the needs of each individual person. The ADA believes that every person living with diabetes should have access to the care, treatments, tools, and information they need to successfully manage their diabetes. It is vital that people with diabetes have the opportunity to work with their health care providers to choose the most appropriate therapeutic option that best meets their individual needs at that particular time. To ensure their access to life-saving treatment, the practice of co-pay accumulator adjustments must be eliminated.

Blocking patient assistance can threaten the health of patients with chronic diseases like diabetes and lead to medication non-adherence or rationing. ADA research has shown that, for one in four insulin users, cost has impacted their use.¹ Rationing or skipping doses of insulin is unsafe and can lead to costly and preventable emergency room and hospital visits.

Ensuring all people with and at risk for diabetes have access to adequate and affordable health care is among ADA's principal policy priorities. HB 135 will help achieve that goal.

Gary Dougherty
Director, State Government Affairs
1-800-676-4065 Ext. 4832
gdougherty@diabetes.org

1-800-DIABETES (342-2383)

diabetes.org
@AmDiabetesAssn



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To protect patients from facing unexpected out-of-pocket costs, and on behalf of the nearly 4.3 million Ohioans with or at risk for diabetes², the American Diabetes Association® supports House Bill 135 and urges your support as well.

Thank you very much for your attention. If you have any questions, please direct them to me at gdougherty@diabetes.org and I will do my best to answer them for you.

¹ American Diabetes Association, Insulin Affordability Survey, 2018, available at <http://main.diabetes.org/dorg/PDFs/2018-insulin-affordability-survey.pdf>

² Diabetes Care 2019;42:1661–1668 | <https://doi.org/10.2337/dc18-1226>


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