

Senator Stephen Huffman, Chair
Senate Health Committee
Ohio State Senate
Columbus, OH 43215



November 30, 2022

OHC Supports HB 135: Prohibit Certain Health Insurance Cost-Sharing Practices

Honorable Chair and Members of the Senate Committee,

On behalf of Oncology Hematology Care, Inc. (OHC) in the greater Cincinnati area, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in **SUPPORT of HB 135: Prohibit Certain Health Insurance Cost-Sharing Practices**. Passage of this bill would take important steps to protect Ohio cancer patients from financial toxicity caused by copay accumulators.

OHC is an independent, physician-led practice that delivers leading-edge technology and treatment options to cancer patients in our community and hosts multiple clinical trials which contribute to innovative cancer research. According to the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, more than 1.9 million new cases of cancer are expected to be diagnosed in the United States in 2022. Of those new cases, 73,700 are expected to be diagnosed in Ohio- many of whom will be treated at OHC. OHC has been fighting cancer on the front lines in Ohio for more than 35 years. We are now one of the nation's largest independent oncology practices, as well as the region's premier source of treatment for nearly every form of adult cancer and complex blood disorder.

Undergoing cancer treatment is already a stressful time for patients. At this time, patients should be focused on getting well and not suffering from anxiety over unnecessarily costly treatment. As practicing oncologists, my fellow physicians and I at OHC are keenly aware that the efficacy of our specialized treatment plans is highly dependent on the patient's ability to adhere to their regimens in a timely manner. Since fear of financial toxicity can cause poor adherence in cancer care, we at OHC care deeply about policies that reduce this burden.

OHC supports state efforts to prohibit copay accumulators since these programs divert manufacturer assistance funding that was intended to lower out of pocket costs away from the patient. Instead, plans use these funds to reimburse themselves the full cost of the drug until funds are exhausted and then charge the patient high copays for subsequent doses without applying any of the funds to the patient's deductible or out of pocket limit. This significantly raises the patient's out of pocket costs and ultimately leads to financial toxicity. Financial toxicity in this context can be defined as the increased financial strain that cancer patients and survivors endure related to the costs of their medical care.

According to a recent study, cancer patients who reported worrying about paying large medical bills were 4.46 times more likely to report avoiding purchase of prescriptions versus those who did not report these concerns.¹ In related studies, patient lack of adherence to treatment plans has been shown to decrease survival rates, increase treatment failures, elevate cancer recurrence, raise healthcare costs,

¹ Chan, Sepassi, Saunders, Goodman, Watanabe. Effects of financial toxicity on prescription drug use and mental well-being in cancer patients. ELSEVIER: Exploratory research in Clinical and Social Pharmacy 6 (April 25, 2022): <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S266727662200035X>

and contribute to up to two-thirds of all medication-related hospitalizations.² With these serious implications of patient financial strain in mind, we encourage the esteemed members of the Senate Committee to join us in support for this measure.

As the practice president and representative of our care team here at OHC, I welcome the opportunity for us to be a resource for you. If you have any further questions related to the impact of financial toxicity on Ohio cancer patients or even just the practice of community oncology in general, please don't hesitate to reach out to myself or our Executive Director Amanda Noble at amanda.noble@usoncology.com.

Sincerely,

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² M.T.E. Puts, H.A. Tu, A. Tourangeau, et al. Factors influencing adherence to cancer treatment in older adults with cancer: a systematic review. *Ann Oncol*, 25 (3) (2014), pp. 564-577. [Factors influencing adherence to cancer treatment in older adults with cancer: a systematic review - Annals of Oncology](#)