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Dustin Holfinger
State Government Relations Director,
American Heart Association
HB 135 - Proponent Testimony

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of HB 135.

Many patient groups, including the American Heart Association, throughout Ohio have appreciated the efforts to address the ongoing, discriminatory nature of accumulator co-payment adjustment programs in health insurance policies. We believe House Bill 135, sponsored by Reps. Susan Manchester and Thomas West is an important tool in leading the crucial debate on ensuring that all financial assistance provided to patients to meet their ever-growing out-of-pocket costs is addressed.

As we are all aware, Ohioans and many throughout the world are, even now, still experiencing numerous hardships as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. These are unprecedented times and vulnerable patient populations need all the health care and financial resources at their disposal to handle the extremely difficult days.

With that being said, we would strongly recommend the passage of HB 135 to require insurers to accept all forms of financial assistance to help patients pay for medications through their mandated co-payment or deductible requirements. The discriminatory policies that are now in place in much of the insurance coverage in this crucial area is not beneficial to patients, especially in these very difficult times.

There is great need for action on this bill now, as many Ohioans continue to face economic crises in their homes. Many measures have already commenced to benefit patients in these uncertain times. Patients with life-threatening and chronic conditions need help more than ever and they are frequently contacting our organizations asking for assistance. Our organization and many others supporting HB 135 believe that acting now on escalating out-of-pockets costs is crucial.

Passing HB 135 and allowing all forms of financial assistance to be applied to mandated co-payment and deductible requirements, vulnerable patient populations can directly help those in need to pay for their crucial medications.

As always, thank you for supporting Ohio's patients and considering our request on this crucial issue.