



November 30, 2022

Senator Stephen Huffman, Chairman
Senator Nickie Antonio, Ranking Minority Member
Senate Health Committee
Ohio Statehouse
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chair Huffman and Ranking Minority Member Antonio,

The Ohio Hematology Oncology Society (OHOS) and the Association for Clinical Oncology (ASCO) are pleased to support **HB 135**, a bill to **Prohibit certain health insurance cost-sharing practices**. Committee passage of HB 135 would put Ohio one step closer to becoming the 16th state to ban harmful copay accumulator practices.

OHOS represents over 200 physicians specializing in the practice of Hematology and Oncology (blood disorders and cancer). OHOS is committed to promoting excellence in the care of patients afflicted with cancer and hematologic disorders in Ohio. ASCO is the national organization representing nearly 45,000 physicians and other healthcare professionals specializing in cancer treatment, diagnosis, and prevention.

OHOS and ASCO are committed to supporting policies that reduce cost while preserving quality of cancer care; however, it is critical that such policies be developed and implemented in a way that does not undermine patient access. Copay accumulator programs target specialty drugs for which manufacturers often provide copay assistance. With a co-pay accumulator program in place, a manufacturer's assistance no longer applies toward a patient's co-pay or out-of-pocket maximum. This policy means that patients will experience increased out of pocket costs and take longer to reach required deductibles. By prohibiting these funds from counting toward patient premiums and deductibles, co-pay accumulators negate the intended benefit of patient assistance programs and remove a safety net for patients who need expensive specialty medications but cannot afford them.

Health insurance companies describe co-pay accumulator programs as a benefit for patients. In reality, they prolong the time it takes for patients to reach deductibles, thereby increasing their financial burden. These programs lack transparency and often are implemented without the patient's knowledge or full understanding of their new "benefit." Increased out-of-pocket costs for the patient can result in significant adverse impacts on patient finances—including medical bankruptcies—and represent a particular hardship for low-income patients and their families. Co-pay accumulator programs can also jeopardize quality and length of life, as patients may forego treatment or seek alternatives to recommended care for non-medical reasons. If a patient does forego treatment, this will lead to poorer health outcomes and, ultimately, higher costs to the health care system.

OHOS and ASCO are encouraged that HB 135 takes steps toward eliminating co-pay accumulator programs in Ohio, and we urge the Senate Health Committee to support the measure. For a more detailed understanding of our policy recommendations on this issue, we invite you to read the [ASCO Position Statement on Co-Pay Accumulators](#) by our affiliate, the American Society of Clinical Oncology. Please contact Dave Dillahunt at ddillahunt@ohos.org or Aaron Segel at ASCO at Aaron.Segel@asco.org if you have any questions or if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

/s/ Slobodan Stanistic, MD

Slobodan Stanistic, MD
President
Ohio Hematology Oncology Society

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lori J. Pierce, MD". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Lori J. Pierce, MD, FASTRO, FASCO
Chair of the Board
Association for Clinical Oncology