



DATE: April 10, 2024

TO: The Honorable Members of the Vermont Senate Committee on Health and Welfare

Sen. Virginia “Ginny” Lyons, *Chair*

Sen. David Weeks, *Vice Chair*

Sen. Martine Larocque Gulick

Sen. Terry Willams

Sen. Ruth Hardy

RE: Support House Bill 233 to Protect Patients in Vermont

The above national and local patient organizations write to express our strong support for House Bill 233, a much-needed bill that will protect patient access to co-pay assistance many Vermonters depend on to cover significant portions of prescription medicine copays. We would like to thank Rep. Mari Cordes for sponsoring this legislation, and Sen. Ginny Lyons and members of the Senate Committee on Health & Welfare for scheduling today’s hearing on this measure as this gives the patient advocacy community the opportunity to express how vitally important this measure is to Vermonters. We look forward to interacting with the Committee and advocating for patients in which we represent to make House Bill 233 law in the State of Vermont.

Language affecting copay accumulator adjuster programs in House Bill 233 would remove existing barriers to copay assistance by requiring all payments made by patients—directly or on their behalf - be counted toward an individual’s overall out-of-pocket maximum payment or deductible. Requiring health insurance carriers to do so will protect patients from surprise bills and treatment delays as well as allowing individuals to utilize the full benefit of co-pay assistance programs.

To date, 20 states alongside DC and Puerto Rico have already stopped this discriminatory practice by passing legislation that bans harmful accumulator policies – Arkansas, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and West Virginia. Additionally, additional states in New England have taken action, or are currently taking action on this very issue. The States of Connecticut and Maine have enacted such legislation, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts alongside the States of Rhode Island and New Hampshire are currently considering legislation. We hope that Vermont will join our neighbors on this issue and ensure that all Vermonters have access to their life-saving, life-sustaining medication.

On behalf of patients across New England, we strongly urge passage of HB 233, and thank you once again for the opportunity to provide testimony today. If we can ever be of a resource on this issue, please do not hesitate to contact Matt Delaney, Government Relations Specialist at the National Bleeding Disorders Foundation and Richard Pezzillo, the Executive Director of the New England Hemophilia Association at mdelaney@hemophilia.org and rpezzillo@newenglandhemophilia.org.



Thank you for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,

The Undersigned Patient Organizations:

- American College of Gastroenterology**
- Association for Clinical Oncology**
- Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations**
- Hemophilia Federation of America**
- Immune Deficiency Foundation**
- Infusion Access Foundation**
- Lupus and Allied Diseases, Association, Inc**
- National Bleeding Disorders Foundation**
- National Eczema Foundation**
- National Multiple Sclerosis Society**
- National Organization of Rheumatology Management**
- New England Hemophilia Association**
- New England Bleeding Disorders Advocacy Coalition**
- National Infusion Center Association**
- National Psoriasis Foundation**
- Patients for Prescription Access**
- U.S. Pain Foundation**