

Rhode Island Chapter

INCORPORATED IN RHODE ISLAND

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



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Testimony in Support of House Bill 5302
House Health and Human Services Committee

Dear Chairperson Donovan and Members of the Committee,

My name is Cody Goldsmith and I am a pediatric resident physician at Hasbro Children's Hospital. I am writing on behalf of the Rhode Island Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics in support of H5302, Co-pay cap for prescription inhaler, devices, and equipment. This bill would alleviate a pervasive financial barrier to treating Asthma, the most common chronic disease in children. I

If I may share a personal story, my childhood was defined by asthma. I recall my mother sleeping on the floor beside my bed to monitor my breathing when I was ill. I vividly remember my father pounding on the door to the pulmonologist's office before the first appointment of the day and I can still feel the simultaneous gratitude and embarrassment. Yet, I now realize that I had it good. I was only hospitalized once or twice and never did I worry about access to my daily medication, the inhaled steroid, that kept me out of the hospital.

Unfortunately, at Lifespan's pediatric clinics, it is common to see families struggle to afford the daily inhaled steroid. On high deductible insurance plans, the co-pay ranges from approximately \$100 to \$400 per month. On low deductible plans, the co-pay ranges from \$40 to \$80 per month. Families use a variety of methods to manage the costs. One family at Lifespan employed Good Rx Prescription coupons to lower costs from \$380 to \$110 per month. Health Spending Accounts are also utilized when possible. However, sometimes families make sacrifices such as accumulating credit card debt, forgoing essentials related to food and housing, and skipping doses of the daily inhaled steroid. 2 Therefore, it is no surprise that higher deductible plans are associated with more frequent hospitalizations for asthma. 3 Concerningly, we anticipate a shortage of the inhaled steroid and a rise of its price as the Pharmaceutical company that manufactures Flovent, a common inhaled steroid, has halted its production as of Jan 1st 2024. 4

From 2015 to 2019, Rhode Island saw a total of 1,075 child hospitalizations for asthma (1.0 per 1,000 children) and 6,919 child emergency department (ED) visits for asthma (6.2 per 1,000 children), with disparities as large as three-fold when stratifying by race or income. 5 Therefore, I respectfully request that the members of the House look favorably upon H5302 because it will protect access in Rhode Island to a medication vital to keeping children with asthma in school and out of the hospital, as it did for me.

Sincerely,

Cody Goldsmith, M.D.

Gregory Fox, MD, FAAP

Chairman, Advocacy Committee
Past President, Rhode Island Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Citations

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