

March 6, 2025

The Honorable Members of House Committee on Health and Human Services
Representative Susan R. Donovan, Chair
Representative Joshua J. Giraldo, First Vice Chair
Representative Brandon C. Potter, Second Vice Chair

RE: Support for House Bill 5302

Dear Chairperson Donovan and Members of the House Health and Human Services Committee:

My name is Daniel Fitzgerald, and I am the Director of Advocacy for the American Lung Association in Rhode Island. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 5302 Relating to Insurance – limiting out of pocket expenses on asthma inhalers, introduced by Representative Morales. If passed, this legislation would ensure lifesaving medications are accessible to all Rhode Islanders.

The American Lung Association is the nation's oldest voluntary public health organization, currently representing the 37 million Americans living with lung diseases, including over 168,000 Rhode Island residents. The Lung Association is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease through research, education, and advocacy.

The Lung Association believes that everyone should have affordable, accessible, and adequate healthcare coverage; that coverage should also ensure that medications and treatments are affordable to the patient. House Bill 5302 would cap the total amount that a covered person is required to pay for a covered prescription asthma inhaler to \$25 per 30-day supply.

A recent literature review by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that even small levels of cost sharing in the range of \$1 to \$5 were associated with reduced use of care, including necessary services.¹ The research shows that cost sharing can lead to other consequences such as increased emergency room visits and negative health outcomes. For children with asthma specifically, research has found associations between higher cost sharing for asthma medications and higher rates of asthma hospitalizations.²

Additionally, research finds that cost sharing increases financial burdens for families, causing some to cut back on care. A 2022 poll found about 1 in 4 adults who take

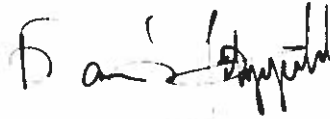
¹ Tricia Brooks, et. al., *Medicaid and HCIP Eligibility, Enrollment, Renewal, and Cost-Sharing Policies as of January 2017: Findings from a 50-State Survey*, (Washington, DC: Kaiser Family Foundation, January 2017), <https://www.kff.org/report-section/medicaid-and-chip-eligibility-enrollment-renewal-and-cost-sharing-policies-as-of-january-2017-introduction/>.

² <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/1105117>

prescription drugs reported difficulty affording their cost, including about 1 in 3 who take 4 or more prescriptions. The poll also found 1 in 4 adults said they or a family member have not filled a prescription, cut pills in half, or skipped doses due to cost.³

The Lung Association strongly supports House Bill 5302 and urges this committee to pass this legislation to ensure lifesaving medications are accessible and affordable to all Rhode Islanders. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel Fitzgerald".

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³ Alex Montero, Audrey Kearney, Liz Hamel, and. Mollyann Brodie, "Americans' Challenges with Health Care Costs," KFF, Jul. 14, 2022.