

# Wisconsin All Copays Count Coalition: Legislators set for pivotal moment this week - Wednesday - to protect WI patients

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*Assembly Hearing on Cole's Act & Potential Floor Votes in Both Chambers Would Pave the Way for Wisconsin to Become the 27th State to Ban PBM Copay Accumulators*

MADISON, Wis. – Wisconsin lawmakers will face a defining moment this Wednesday as the Assembly Health, Aging and Long-Term Care Committee holds a critical public hearing on Cole's Act (AB 173), legislation aimed at banning Pharmacy Benefit Manager (PBM) copay accumulator programs that unfairly inflate prescription drug costs for patients.

Copay accumulator policies prevent patient assistance from counting toward insurance deductibles, forcing individuals—many with chronic or life-threatening conditions—to pay thousands of dollars out of pocket before coverage begins.

The Wisconsin All Copays Count Coalition (WACCC) applauds the committee for holding the hearing after an overwhelming outpouring of support statewide.

“We are thankful to the members of the Assembly Health Committee and chairman Rep. Clint Moses, for holding this hearing, and allowing the voices of patients, doctors, pharmacies, and others to be heard on this issue,” said Rob Gundermann chair of the Wisconsin All Copays Count Coalition. “For too long, predatory PBM insurer policies have forced patients to pay twice for prescriptions, burdening families with crushing upfront cost simply to access life-saving medications.

Wednesday is a critical day to make progress on passing this legislation that will benefit thousands in our state.”

Bill Schmidtknecht, whose son Cole is the namesake of the legislation, issued an emotional plea to lawmakers to act without delay.

“Everyone who has heard my family’s story knows my son Cole would still be alive today if not for these cruel PBM policies that suddenly made his inhaler unaffordable at the pharmacy counter,” said Bil Schmidtknecht. “When legislators delay, families pay the price. My family paid the ultimate price. No parent should ever have to bury their child because an insurance middleman decided profits matter more than patients. The clock is running out. Legislators must act now to pass AB 173 and SB 203 so no other family has to suffer like we have.”

With committee action expected, Cole’s Act can move immediately to floor votes in both the Assembly and Senate, giving Wisconsin the opportunity to join the growing majority of states that have already banned PBM copay accumulator practices.

“Once the Assembly Health Committee acts, the Legislature can move these bills to the floor and pass them without delay,” Gundermann added. “We cannot wait another year while families are priced out of essential medications. Other states are stepping up to protect patients. Wisconsin must do the same now.”

The Coalition is urging the public to immediately contact their legislators and demand a YES vote on Cole’s Act and for the Assembly and Senate to also bring the two companion bills AB 173 and SB 203 for a floor vote.

Patients and families can take action right now by visiting:

<https://www.wi4patients.com/take-action>

A quick email or phone call to a legislator can make the difference between life and death for patients across Wisconsin.

Hearing details can be found

at <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/raw/cid/1971217> and for more information on WACCC and patient stories please visit [www.wi4patients.com](http://www.wi4patients.com)