

**Testimony of Kendy Troiano**  
**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Ways and Means**  
**Full Committee Hearing**  
**Health Care Price Transparency: A Patient's Right to Know**  
**May 16, 2023**

Good morning, thank you for inviting me to be here today.

My name is Kendy Troiano, and I am the Human Resources Director at Clark Grave Vault Company in Columbus, Ohio. For 125 years, Clark Grave Vault has manufactured steel, stainless steel and copper burial vaults.

Our company employs 114 people, most of whom are in Ohio, though we have companies and employees in 11 other states. Most of our employees are blue collar workers with a high school education or GED. Our company is made up of 98% men who range in age from 18 to 67. I have worked at Clark for 26 years, and I am responsible for managing all human resources and employee benefits, but I am here today to speak about our health care insurance and why we believe price transparency is so important.

During our annual renewal for health care, we were told that our premiums were going to increase 35% because of one large claim and 2 claims that were between \$20,000 and \$30,000. A 35% increase was not feasible for us or for the employees. The costs of raw goods have increased, and we cannot continue our current structure when costs continue to increase at a high rate. We knew there had to be something available to allow our employees to shop for the cost of health care – just like they shop for a car, dishwasher, or other personal items.

We decided to switch our traditional health plan to a new kind of health insurance called Sidecar Health. We were seeking a long-term partner that could lower health care costs without jeopardizing quality or access to care. My employer values being able to offer generous benefits to our employees, and as a two-time cancer survivor, I need the security of knowing that I am covered and that I can afford my health care coverage. Maintaining coverage that is affordable to both the company and the employees is very important to our company.

We chose Sidecar Health for our employees because their model is designed to give consumers control over cost and choice. Their plan allows us the freedom to choose any licensed provider who accepts cash or credit card because we are not constrained by networks, formularies or prior authorization. We are provided a "budget," or Benefit Amount, for any medical need, and allows us to choose a provider based on that budget. It is our choice to stay within the budget, or to pay a little more. When we find care for more than the Benefit Amount, we pay the difference (often the amount of a co-pay) and when we find care for less, we keep the savings through a credit. For the first time, we have the kind of price transparency needed to shop for care. With Sidecar Health, we can engage with our health care system the way we do everything else in our lives and pay for care at the time of service. Employees have a credit card tied to the Sidecar Health account to pay their expenses up front without tying up their funds.

**In addition to the** savings we see as a company, our employees **also see savings** at the provider's office and the pharmacy. For example, my husband's oncology visit last year was billed to my insurance company for \$233. This year through self-pay, I paid \$100 for the same visit. His lab work went from \$80 per visit to \$30 per visit for cash pay. Prescription coverage is costing me \$44 every 3 months instead of \$115. A procedure for one of our employees was decreased from \$4,500 to \$2,000.

Our employees love the prescription drug coverage, and they can utilize mail order services, or online coupons. Both generic and brand prescriptions are covered under Sidecar Health. By shopping through Sidecar Health's website, they know how much their costs are before they go to the pharmacy, making them informed consumers.

It's no secret employers pay the highest rates for health care in the U.S. but these investments often do not result in better benefits for employees. Not anymore. Sidecar Health does not compromise quality or access.

Healthcare providers have been programmed that the only way to have health insurance is to negotiate with insurance companies for discounts, bill them and wait for payment. Sidecar Health is changing that by paying the provider in advance using a cash discount.

We believe very strongly that our employees are consumers of health care and need access to pricing information and data to make intelligent choices. No one should be denied access to knowing what services cost in our health care system. For years we have tried to find a company that would provide us with consumer information and help our employees make good, economical decisions about their health care and we feel we have finally found that partner. People shop when they purchase furniture, cars, or services, yet they cannot price shop when they search for their health care needs. We feel it is vital that our employees know what their health care costs them and the company. By knowing the cost beforehand, they make the choice to remain within a budgeted amount or spend a little more. Knowing the cost in advance brings them power to choose how to spend their healthcare dollars. Without transparent cost of healthcare, it is a mystery how much is spent and how much they will owe. Through transparency, they can budget and prepare for their healthcare costs.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today, and I look forward to your questions.