

## **House Finance Subcommittee on Health and Human Services**

### **Testimony by Bruce Hill, President and CEO Buckeye Health Plan March 21, 2017**

Chairman Romanchuk, Ranking Member Sykes, Vice Chair Sprague, Representative LaTourette and Representative O'Brien; good morning.

Health care is a very complex issue with convoluted systems and many involved parties with their own interests and perspectives. Unfortunately, it is not a problem, nor does it have a solution, that you can easily put on a bumper sticker. Despite this, you and your colleagues have been courageous innovators taking on health care challenges and not accepting status quo. You have committed to making needed improvements, knowing the obstacles that you would face. This has not been easy given that the majority of the health care system is driven by federal rules and regulations. You have chosen to apply private industry practices through the use of Managed Care Organizations as your partner and conduit for change.

My name is Bruce Hill, and it is my privilege to serve as the President and CEO of Buckeye Health Plan, one of your Managed Care Organization partners. Buckeye serves more than 300,000 Ohioans in the Medicaid program and in MyCare, with more than 1,200 Ohioans staffing our health plan. Buckeye believes in hiring from the community and utilizing local knowledge and expertise for our membership. As a team, our calling is to transform the health care system for the betterment of Ohioans.

Buckeye is proud to be your partner in improving quality, promoting innovation, and reducing costs in these taxpayer-funded programs. We are making a positive difference in the lives of our members, many of whom rely on the services we provide to keep or find a job, live comfortably in their homes rather than in an institution and provide a better life for their family.

Today, I want to report to you on the work we are doing to transform the health of our communities and to request that you push forward with this work to make Ohio's health care delivery system one of the best and most innovative in the nation.

While opportunities for improvement still exist, what do those most impacted—our members covered by these services—think? Last year, approximately 2,700 Buckeye MyCare members who called our MyCare hotline chose to take a satisfaction survey at the end of their call. When asked whether they would recommend Buckeye to a friend, 94 percent of the respondents said they would. This reflects the bonds that the Buckeye team have formed with these members and their high level of satisfaction with the services we provide.

Why are MyCare members so satisfied? It is because of the lengths that we go to improve their lives. Let me give you a specific example:

“Ron” is a MyCare member who was experiencing debilitating health problems, ranging from depression to difficulties with his eyes. He needed new glasses, new hearing aids and was having multiple problems with his feet. At one time, Ron was on the brink of suicide and was routinely going to a local hospital for help with his health problems.

When he became a Buckeye MyCare member, his care manager, Christy, became the main point of contact for Ron. Christy coordinated with Ron, his doctors and his specialists to make sure Ron was getting all of his needs met. In addition, she helped Ron move into assisted living, a better solution that also offered him the independence he wanted.

Ron took responsibility for his health care with help from his care manager, and now he reports that he is content and happy.

This is a great example of how we are transforming the health care system and our community one person at a time.

There are many more stories just like Ron’s, and countless examples of Buckeye’s team of nearly 1,200 Ohioans working to improve the lives of vulnerable Ohioans. Stories like these are getting national recognition. I will provide you with written examples of other member stories, including one about our Addition in Pregnancy Program. “Modern Healthcare” recently featured this remarkable story of how Buckeye is leading the way among Ohio’s Medicaid managed care plans as a health care innovator.

Through your partnership with Ohio’s managed care organizations to bring private industry practices to bear on the health care delivery system, we have collectively achieved improvements in:

**Quality** – with Ohio’s plans delivering higher quality of care measures and being ranked nationally as high-performing plans by the recognized national lead organization, NCQA.

**Cost Improvements** – through working more effectively with members and providers, we ensure the right care, at the right time and at the right location, saving tax payers more than \$1 billion annually.

**Innovation** – health plans have used payment reforms as one of many means to achieve reforms in the health care system.

How are we making these improvements? It is by integrating acute medical, behavioral, vision, pharmacy and transportation services, and by offering members the ability to drive the person-centered services they desire. Buckeye also maximizes care management and service coordination across all providers, from a holistic perspective. Our care coordinators and case managers are navigators of health care services to ensure thoughtful and person-centered care planning. This coordination helps members experience better health outcomes and more appropriate utilization of services.

Buckeye helps members through life transitions, including movement into the community, gaining employment and self-direction of services. We empower every member to have a voice in his or her care and to make choices to better their lives. Every member is an individual and their needs are unique. We are committed to understanding and incorporating each person's preferences and goals in order to help them succeed.

Our providers are critical partners for us, from pre- to post-care. We use our providers as resources, utilizing their assets to provide the best care possible for our members. We also seek to ensure no disruptions to members and providers through a seamless continuity-of-care process. Currently, we have a robust network of more than 30,000 providers and 20,000 community partners across the state that help us serve our members. We are committed to working with local providers, advocates, and the existing community infrastructure that has direct ties to our members.

As part of today's panel, I want to specifically talk about the role that Medicaid managed care plans have played in improving care coordination for two very vulnerable populations—children in foster care and children who are receiving adoption assistance. The inclusion of these youth into managed care in the past year has given Buckeye the opportunity to positively impact the lives of Ohio families facing distinct and often complex challenges.

Buckeye's experience with serving foster children began 10 years ago when Lucas County opted to contract with Buckeye to provide care coordination for children in the custody of the county's child welfare agency. Our partnership with Lucas County has been a success and has helped pave the way for the state to fully incorporate the rest of Ohio's foster care population into managed care. The process of integrating these youth into managed care began in the fall and is proceeding at a deliberate pace. By summer, the phase-in will be complete and all of Ohio's approximately 14,000 foster youth will receive coordinated health care through one of the five Medicaid health plans.

The carve-in of this population has gone smoothly, mainly because the plans developed a close partnership with state, county and community stakeholders. We worked diligently with these partners to identify best practices and to design and implement a well-coordinated rollout for the program. Our preparation has included comprehensive assessments for all incoming youth. Further, we have established a process to ensure that prior services are not disrupted during the transition to managed care.

In practice, managed care organizations serve foster children and their foster families in a manner beyond just adjudicating claims. As part of our assessments, Buckeye has focused on the behavioral needs, social determinants and barriers to care for new foster members. By working closely with foster members, care coordinators are able to potentially identify unmet needs of foster children and connect them with the

appropriate caregivers. For example, Buckeye's expert care coordinators ensure that the needs of each foster child and foster family are met, including doctor's visits and appointments, behavioral health care, transportation services, and community-based support.

With respect to adopted children, approximately 12,000 children statewide began receiving benefits through managed care January 1, 2017. Similar to our extensive preparation for the foster care population, Buckeye's care coordinators have proactively worked with the authorized representatives for each child and have arranged for a smooth transition of care. In practice, the adopted children in our care have consistently received support from their care manager, from arranging appointments to accompanying the child to their doctor's visit.

Over the last decade, Ohio's managed care organizations have played a crucial role in driving health-care delivery innovation, increasing value, and realizing efficiencies in our existing care framework. We appreciate the opportunity to partner with the state to serve Ohio's Medicaid enrollees and modernize Ohio's Medicaid program. As our members will confirm, the work we do is improving health and life outcomes for Ohio's families and communities.

We commend you for what you have done so far and ask that you continue to push this improvement work forward. Your work is not for the faint of heart. You will be challenged by those defending the status quo. The old system, however, was fraught with problems, and improvements were—and are—still needed.

You have my personal commitment that Buckeye Health Plan and my colleagues will continue to be an effective partner in driving the needed improvements in health care deserved by Ohioans. I would like to give you my personal contact information to ensure I am readily available to you as we work through issues.

Thank you and I look forward to our continued partnership and discussion.

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