

March 22, 2017

Good Afternoon, Chairman Romanchuk, Ranking Member Sykes and members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Health and Human Services.

My name is Tom Whiston. I am a County Commissioner and a Registered Pharmacist.

I am speaking in support of the Budget proposal to build a Sustainable Program for Children with Medical Handicaps. Pharmacy provides medications and other supplies for BCMH through the Ohio Department of Health (ODH). Many pharmacies are not BCMH providers and most all pharmacies are Medicaid providers. The program run under the ODH has not been consistent or sometimes easy to work with in regards to coverage or payment. Some pharmacies have been authorized to provide services and then denied payment for medications that cost thousands of dollars. We have had patients with letters of coverage that are not loaded into the system and cannot process their claims. The coverages are not standardized as they are for Medicaid. The billing and payment for BCMH services require a secondary billing that sometimes does not work. The program has led to frustration many times for the pharmacy providers.

The new system would grandfather anyone currently in the program and would provide coverage for patients at the 225% level as opposed to the original 185% level for those newly enrolled individuals. The program would allow patients to visit almost all of Ohio pharmacies as opposed to those BCMH pharmacies only. The new program would create sustainability under the Ohio Medicaid system. The duplication of services would also be eliminated. This new program would reduce administrative costs and provide a better payment solution for pharmacy.

Counties would benefit from this new program by the reduction of inside millage cost currently incurred to operate the program, which is an outdated mandate from the state. BCMH has consistently run over budget to the tune of \$11 million. Better oversight and management with reduced administrative costs will allow for more dollars to go to providing patient services and medication. The patients will not have the cumbersome requirement to have dual enrollment in both Ohio Medicaid and BCMH.

I am in support and favor the plan to establish a new program to bring the care and billing for children with medical handicaps into a new and sustainable program. The benefit will be realized by the State, pharmacy, counties, and most of all the children.

Thank you and I will answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Tom Whiston R.Ph.

Morrow County Commissioner