

March 20, 2017

Chair Romanchuk, Ranking member Skyes, and Members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Health and Human Services, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify on HB 49.

My name is Kristy Mudd, born and raised in Clermont County. Grew up in a family that I did not want for anything, Partied a little bit in high school, **but nothing extreme.** **Things changed for me in 1998. Up to then I was working fulltime.** I hurt my back and was prescribed pain medication. I started off taking it as I should. It quickly became something I HAD to have daily. That was the start of my addiction. I went through a few years of that, taking pills daily. My doctor wanted to do surgery, I declined and that is when my Doctor stopped prescribing my medication. I then started buying the pain medications off the street. Then it got to be hard to find the amount of pills I needed. Someone then introduced me to the "super duper pain reliever" (Heroin).

I snorted it for about the first 6 months. Then I started using the needle. This went on for about 3 ½ years. I went to treatment for the first time at age 29. **After treatment,** I had two years sobriety. Then I relapsed. People, places, and things. The people I was hanging around and the places I started visiting again - Led me back into the lifestyle.

I was back out using Heroin until I was 35. At 35, I got into trouble for the first time in my life. I was charged with a drug abuse instrument. The arresting officer (a family friend) had told me to take responsibility for myself. If I had a problem, go take care of it. I went ahead and got myself back into treatment. I did not wait for them to court order me. I was ashamed; I am more than a drug addict. I am someone's daughter, I'm a mother, and a friend to many.

One of the factors that aided with my treatment was the availability of Medicaid. Without it I couldn't have went to treatment. I went to Northland for Outpatient Services, and began the Medication Assisted Treatment. I started on Suboxone daily and engaged in groups five times a week. I was at Northland for 2 years, and successfully completed the program. I began volunteering in the county, helping others see that Recovery is possible. Eighteen months doing that led me to my position today. I am now a Certified Peer Recovery Coach in Ohio. I am employed by Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health on the Outreach Team. I would not be where I am today if I wasn't eligible for Medicaid. **Instead of drowning, Medicaid allowed me to care for my family while I cared for myself as well.**

Today I have three years and four months of sobriety. I help people struggling with drugs, More than half of the people I engage are Unemployed, no social skills, and have no HOPE! If Medicaid changes and people have to pay for Insurance with money they don't have, we will lose more people than what we are already losing today! It is our Responsibility to help our residents of Ohio! Instead of taking the help away; why not offer more help! We have lost too many lives and our children are suffering.

Compassion goes a long ways. I cannot say it enough without Medicaid we will not get anywhere with this Epidemic we are fighting! Accountability is a part of recovery, and I agree we need people to be functioning citizens of society. They will not get there if they don't have a chance.

Thanks you for allowing me the opportunity to testify. I welcome any questions that you may have at this time.

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