



Date: November 13, 2017

To: Chairman Tim Schaffer  
Members of the Ohio House Ways and Means Committee

From: Robert Falcone, MD  
CEO  
Columbus Medical Association

RE: Support for HB 317 – Tax Deduction for Uncompensated Service

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The Columbus Medical Association (CMA) is writing to express our support for HB 317 – to provide a tax deduction to physicians for uncompensated service.

The CMA has an affiliate organization, the Physicians' Free Clinic, which operates the largest free clinic in Central Ohio. Since our inception, we have provided care for over 35,000 patients. Our clinic sees patients on a weekly basis in a shared office space at the Columbus Department of Health. Also, our physicians see designated patients of the clinic in their personal offices, also uncompensated.

Our clinic relies completely on voluntary care. Resources that we are able to raise to support the clinic are designated for care coordination, transportation services and to pay for medications when we cannot get appropriate donated drugs.

In spite of all the efforts for increased Medicaid coverage, there remain tens of thousands of Central Ohio residents who do not qualify for Medicaid. And with changes in the past few months that defunded navigators to help patients enroll in coverage and shortening of sign-up period for ACA based coverage, we anticipate an increase in the number of people that we will see in 2018. HB 317 is timely, as we will need help from more volunteers to create additional access in our clinic.

The small amount of support that this tax deduction would provide to volunteer physicians provides great value. Based on our research for our current funding partners, support for the clinic earns a return of approximately \$5 in cost savings for every dollar invested.

We recognize that tight fiscal conditions made new "expenditure" efforts a challenge. Yet this is a circumstance where any resources allocated in this manner would result in a significant return.

Our volunteer physicians appreciate the public/private partnership that would be created by the type of support provided in HB 317. We urge your support.

