

**Testimony for Ohio House Finance
Subcommittee on Health & Human Services
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Good afternoon. My name is Lynn Williams and I am a staff person representing the Contact Center located in Cincinnati, Ohio. Contact Center is a community, membership based organization that advocates for low-and moderate income people to have food, health care, and job/income security. Our organization encourages civic participation of our members to have an input on public policy that directly affects their lives.

A majority of Contact Center's members receive health care through Medicaid. Some obtained Medicaid with the passage of Medicaid Expansion. Although I invited individuals to attend today, most were unable to attend this hearing because they are working at paid jobs or providing care to either children or disabled and elderly family members. Jerry Davis is an example of one of our members on Medicaid Expansion who was not able to be here today because he is working at a paid job.

Jerry, who is in his fifties, went without health care for years of his adult life. When I first met Jerry he stated that he needed health care for his hypertension, hernia surgery and cataracts. Despite all these conditions he was actively seeking employment and in fact worked temporary jobs trying to make ends meet. He was involved in our advocacy for Medicaid Expansion and came here to the Statehouse to testify with us. The point I am emphasizing is that Jerry's life was turned around because of finally getting on Medicaid. He got hypertension medication, had hernia surgery and saved his eyesight with cataract surgery. Even though he did not have a job at the time, he was doing active job search. His story is an example of those who could be terminated from Medicaid because of the Medicaid work requirement approved for Ohio. Those looking for work could lose their health care coverage at a time when they need their health care to be able to be healthy in order to be hired. Let people doing active job search be able to get their health care needs met on Medicaid.

A second example is one of our members, a young adult in his early twenties who needed help for depression. Mental health counseling paid for by Medicaid helped him overcome his depression and obtain a job. He has now stayed employed for two solid years with an excellent work record. Medicaid Expansion was a major reason why he is now an employed tax payer in Ohio. He does not want his name released because of the stigma associated with mental illness and because he does not want his mental health treatment known by his employer. If Ohio's Medicaid work requirement had been implemented at the time when he was doing job search he might never have received help until he ended up in the hospital emergency room.

I could tell more stories of our members who have been helped such as:

- a woman in her early fifties who was diagnosed with cancer and had radiation treatment, saving her life. She was able to keep her job.
- a woman in her fifties going blind in both eyes who had cataracts removed, saving her eyesight; she was able to continue in her job search program
- a man in his fifties diagnosed with hypertension and cancer who was helped and now has a new lease on life
- dental care for a man who had gone without dental care for years and was able to save his teeth from being removed
- ongoing thyroid medication for a woman in her forties to be able to continue job search and volunteer work hours at the Contact Center

I am urging this Committee to oppose the work requirements for Medicaid Expansion because those doing job search will fall through the medical safety net. Doing job search is the time when they truly need to be healthy in order to obtain jobs and climb out of poverty. Please do not turn your backs on the poor with medical needs in Ohio.