

Testimony in Support of Ohio Commission on Minority Health Budget

April 8th, 2019

Health Care Access Now, Cincinnati OH

Sarah Mills, MPA, CEO

Chairman Romanchuk, Ranking Minority Member West and esteemed committee Members, I am Sarah Mills, CEO of Health Care Access Now, a nonprofit organization and Certified Pathways Community HUB based in Cincinnati, Ohio. Our service area is primarily Hamilton County; and includes Butler, Clermont, and Warren Counties. Thank you for allowing me to provide written testimony regarding our work and how it will be impacted by the budget.

Health Care Access Now's mission is to improve the access and delivery of healthcare for Greater Cincinnati's underserved populations; the poor and working poor who are often uninsured or underinsured, through culturally and linguistically appropriate service delivery. We are funded by grants and we earn revenue through our contracts with the Medicaid Managed Care Plans. We also receive partial funding from the Ohio Commission on Minority Health to support our hub services for our Maternal and Child Care Coordination Program.

Health Care Access Now (HCAN) has been working since 2009 to pair individual, diverse needs with the complicated matrix of services in our community. We have worked with pregnant, maternal, pediatric, and adult clients with chronic disease. In addition to employing community health workers, partnering with care coordination agencies, and serving as a practicum site for Community Health

Workers earning their certification, in 2018 HCAN launched a Certified Community Health Worker Training program to help address the growing need for Certified Community Health Workers. We are working with Ohio Means Jobs and other community partners to develop this labor force. Many organizations are delivering exceptional clinical care and social services in our community and across the state. Despite this effort we are still ranked 49th in birth outcomes for African American births. What is the missing piece? According to the Cradle Cincinnati report Preterm Birth in Cincinnati, pre-term birth is a leading cause of infant mortality. Stress, health factors, community factors, history, and infection are five key factors that can influence risk.

The Pathways Community HUB Model provides a structure flexible enough to meet individual and diverse needs, while at the same time provides a firm and rigorous process. This process maintains fidelity to the Pathway model and allows the outcomes to be evaluated. Community Health Workers use this evidence based, peer reviewed model to build trusted relationships. Once they have established this relationship they provide education, support, and connections to resources and health care services to the client and reduce risk factors.

The Ohio Commission on Minority Health has supported this work and in our Hub an additional 346 women were engaged in our service area because of the funding, and very simply, with additional dollars we can serve more women.

In 2018 based on preliminary program data 81% of our Hub clients were African-American. Our Low Birth Weight rate for singleton births to African-American

mothers was 11.8%. The Hamilton County LBW Rate for African American's was 14.6%

The Pre-Term rate for singleton births to African-American mothers working with the Hub was 11.8% compared to the County rate of 14.2%.

There is not one silver bullet that will solve the health disparities in our community. Our community, and others using the Certified Pathways Community Hub Model have identified a part of the solution that does make an impact- we just need to scale! Our purpose is to help our clients engage in the health care system and their community. Using the Pathway Community Hub Model our Certified Community Health Workers pair diverse and individual needs with the complicated matrix of services in our community. Please support the Ohio Commission on Minority Health with additional funding so that we can impact our communities and begin to address the great health disparities in our state.

References

Cradle Cincinnati Pre-term birth report: <https://www.cradlecincinnati.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Preterm-Birth-Report-Web-Compressed.pdf>, April, 5 2019.

Ohio Public Health Data Warehouse on 3/4/2019 2:40 PM with data from 3/4/2019. The Ohio Department of Health specifically disclaims responsibility for any analysis, interpretations or conclusions.

<http://publicapps.odh.ohio.gov/EDW/DataBrowser/Browse/OhioLiveBirths>