

Testimony of Kim Mathews
House Finance: Health & Human Services Sub. Committee
Wednesday, April 10, 2019

Chairman Romanchuk, Ranking Member West, and Members of the Finance Sub-Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Kim Mathews. I live in Licking County, OH. I serve as the Co-Chair of the Children with Medical Handicaps (BCMh) Parent Advisory Council, and I serve as a founding member of the Ohio Cystic Fibrosis Legislative Task Force.

I stand before you today regarding the Ohio Department of Health's Children with Medical Handicaps (BCMh) program. **The Mission of BCMh is to assure, through the development and support of high quality, coordinated systems, that children with special health care needs and their families obtain comprehensive care and services that are family centered, community based, and culturally sensitive.**

Around 40,000 Ohio families rely on BCMh to cover the gaps when private insurance and other public programs will not.

The BCMh program is a payer of last resort. It helps families whose children are fighting life limiting genetic diseases receive comprehensive support in navigating insurance markets and coverage plans. BCMh assists families with huge financial burdens from increasing out-of-pocket costs, from narrowing provider networks, and limited services offered in both the private and public insurance market. **BCMh keeps families working and keeps them out of medical bankruptcy.**

I am grateful, as is the cystic fibrosis community, to the Governor and his Administration for the executive budget proposal that includes funding to continue strong support of the BCMh program by maintaining income eligibility and available services while retaining the program within the Ohio Department of Health. For 100 years, this program has a long successful history of being a safety-net for families with children who have serious medical conditions. **As a citizen of Ohio, I ask for your support of the Governor's Executive Budget proposal for the BCMh children's line item (440-505).**

Re: The BCMh Targeted over 21 Program (line item 440-507) - I respectfully ask for your support of an amendment for a *minimal increase* to raise the line item by \$659,586 per fiscal year, which will assist in restoring vital services. This part of the BCMh program provides services to those over the age of 21 living with the life-threatening genetic disease of cystic fibrosis. This line item also assists hemophilia patients with securing private insurance coverage through the HIPP program (Health Insurance Premium Payment Program). While we are grateful that the Governor's proposal includes a funding increase in this line item, the program still requires a slight funding increase to restore *life sustaining services previously covered by BCMh* (18 inpatient hospital days, outpatient testing, and outpatient cystic fibrosis care center doctor visits). These services were lost in previous budget seasons due to severe funding cuts made to the BCMh budget. **An amendment supporting this *minimal increase* in funding will allow life sustaining services to be restored.**

I also ask for your support of amendment I_133_0863 to amend section 101.38 of the Revised Code regarding the Ohio Cystic Fibrosis Legislative Task Force. **This amendment is simply to align appointments and terms of the task force members to be concurrent with the Ohio General Assembly Legislative calendar.**

In closing, the BCMh and cystic fibrosis families are wonderfully encouraged by the Governor's budget proposal regarding BCMh. For this, we are exceedingly thankful and grateful.

I ask for your strong support of the BCMh program to protect and restore vital services for its most vulnerable population living with chronic and life limiting health conditions.

I would be happy to answer any questions.