



Senator Matt Huffman – 12th District
Senate Health, Human Services, & Medicaid Committee
February 26, 2019
Senate Bill 25 – Sponsor Testimony

Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Health, Human Services, & Medicaid Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 25, which will add a requirement for able-bodied adults otherwise eligible for Medicaid to be actively employed in order to receive those benefits.

As you may know, Medicaid spending has drastically increased in recent years. Of the over \$72 billion dollars allocated each year in the budget for fiscal years 2018 and 2019, Medicaid consumed over 38% of funds – far outweighing any other category of appropriation¹. This steady increase was exacerbated by Medicaid expansion. The new expansion eligibility group was subject to miniscule employment rules, which resulted in a large amount of individuals leaving the workforce once they began receiving state-sponsored health insurance.

Two of the eligibility groups this spending supports are the parent and other caretaker relatives group and the expansion group. Of those eligibility groups, those under the former have no employment requirements, while those under the latter have such lenient and vague requirements that there is in fact no true obligation for them either.

This legislation adds a clear work requirement for Medicaid recipients under both the expansion and parent/other caretaker relatives eligibility groups. Beneficiaries in these groups, ages 18-65, would be required to actively work at least twenty hours per week, averaged monthly. The bill does, however, make exceptions for individuals who satisfy any of the following conditions:

- Enrollment in an accredited institution of higher education or an occupational training program
- Active participation in an alcohol or drug addiction treatment program
- Medical certification as physically or mentally unfit for employment
- Providing care for either/both a child under one year of age or a child with a medical condition or disability determined by the Medicaid director to warrant an exemption.

To be clear, the goal of this legislation is not to “take” benefits from Medicaid recipients. There are no funding cuts included in the language, nor are any eligibility groups eliminated. Rather, this legislation seeks to ensure that able-bodied beneficiaries return to or maintain regular employment. This action places beneficiaries on the path to independent, employer-sponsored insurance and helps spur on the economy as a result.

Members of the Committee, I am grateful for your consideration of Senate Bill 25 and would be happy to answer questions at this time.

¹ <http://interactivebudget.ohio.gov/Budgets/default.aspx?BudgetFunds=Operating>