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Proponent Testimony House Bill 203

Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio and Members of the Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee, thank you for the opportunity for Primary Health Solutions to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 203.

Primary Health Solutions is a non-profit, federally qualified health center (FQHC) serving Butler County with centers in Hamilton, Fairfield, Middletown and Oxford. Our approach to care is patient-centered. This means that with technology and our expanded resources we effectively coordinate healthcare needs. Our goal is to offer a comprehensive range of healthcare services, on a sliding-fee scale, to all patients regardless of income or insurance coverage. Due to their economic situations, many patients served by PHS would otherwise go without much needed healthcare.

In addition to services provided at our health centers, we operate a mobile dental office. The forty foot motor coach fully equipped as a dental office with two dental operatories provides onsite dental care to children in the public schools of Butler County. School officials have advised that onsite dental care is resulting in improved student attendance and performance.

If we are ever going to improve the oral health and overall wellness in our communities across Ohio, we need to expand access to our most underserved populations as early as possible. At Primary Health Solutions, we use our Mobile Dental Office to get access to children as young as three through a partnership we have forged with the Butler County Educational Services Center. This partnership allows us to provide critical access to comprehensive dental access throughout Butler and Preble County for these students and their families. Passage of this bill will ensure that comprehensive programs would coordinate with a patient's dental home when appropriate and ensure that mobile dental offices are providing comprehensive services and not just screenings that don't address the underlying need for treatment of dental disease.

We currently partner with Hamilton, Fairfield, Middletown, Madison Local, Talawanda, Lakota and New Miami Schools to provide comprehensive dental services. It is important to differentiate between programs such as ours and many of the out-of-state operatives that come into Ohio, screen for oral disease and then leave after collecting Medicaid reimbursement. These patients then need definitive treatment and come to one of our health centers, and we are not able to collect reimbursement. We are still providing treatment to these children, but this is a financial burden on our organization that could be avoided. Additionally, these screening only models lead to treatment delays for these underserved children. We can all agree that this is unacceptable and we believe that H.B. 203 will positively affect this.

Again, thank you Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Senate Health, Human Services & Medicaid Committee, for this opportunity to share our views on House Bill 203 and the value of providing onsite dental care in our communities. I am happy to answer any questions at this time.