



House Finance Subcommittee on Health & Human Services

Representative Robert Sprague, Chair

Proponent Testimony for Senate Bill 332

November 17, 2016

United Way of Central Ohio is committed to reducing poverty in Franklin County. We do this by connecting individuals and families with high quality and high impact services, improving neighborhoods and ensuring systems and policies are effective.

To do this important work, we have embraced the Pathways Community HUB model, which we know from research and practice in other Ohio communities, is an effective way to engage with families and identify and address the challenges they face. Not only does this model provide a way to help people thrive, it also offers a way to use resources more efficiently to achieve positive outcomes.

As part of our poverty reduction efforts, United Way of Central Ohio is focused on the issue of infant mortality in our community. Unfortunately, Franklin County is home to one of the highest infant mortality rates in the country. Each week, two to three Franklin County families experience the death of a baby before his or her first birthday. The infant mortality rate for African American babies is two-and-a-half times that of Caucasian babies. Not only are too many babies dying before their first birthdays, 13 percent of babies are born too early. Disorders related to premature births and low birth weights are the leading causes of infant deaths and contribute to ongoing and long-term health challenges.

United Way of Central Ohio applauds Senator Shannon Jones and Senator Charleta Tavares for introducing legislation that takes a comprehensive approach to reducing infant mortality rates in our state. UWCO is especially pleased with the bill's emphasis on the Pathways Community HUB model as a strategy for connecting pregnant women with crucial resources in their communities.

United Way of Central Ohio first learned about Pathways Community HUBs from the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Campaign for Grade Level Reading. Initially attracted to the model as a way to improve kindergarten readiness, we quickly realized the power it has to facilitate deeper engagement with families in order to holistically address the array of needs they face. Through extensive community conversations about this model, it became clear that a Franklin County Pathways Community HUB would benefit families, health and human service agencies and the philanthropic community.

Families in need often face complex and interconnected issues that require them to seek help from multiple sources. This is a time-consuming and logistically-challenging balancing act. The HUB infrastructure provides a way to efficiently make connections to high quality services and ensure crucial needs are addressed.

Health and human service providers are well aware of the multiple needs of their clients, but often lack the resources for effective care coordination. The Pathways Community HUB model offers an efficient way to link clients to services beyond those offered by one particular agency and makes resources available specifically to pay for these important care coordination efforts.

Funders supporting the goal of reducing infant mortality by directing resources through specific programmatic structures often struggle to realize how their investments directly connect to impact. The Pathways Community HUB model precisely aligns every invested dollar to a specific, successful outcome. This transition of providing meaningful and coordinated high-quality service (versus funding a high volume of potentially disconnected services) presents not only a high degree of accountability for service providers, but ensures investment into outcomes that are measurable, successful, and cost-effective. In addition, the use of Community Health Workers provides a way to further extend a community's resources by allowing professionals such as nurses to focus on those clients who experience more complex needs and are in most need of their clinical expertise.

The Care Coordination Network, Franklin County's Pathways Community HUB, provides:

- A single point of contact for individuals and families managing multiple needs,
- Standard and organized pathways for information flow and funding,
- Accountability for outcomes.

Franklin County's Care Coordination Network is currently working with an initially small but growing population of pregnant clients. We also work with pediatric and adult clients in an effort to provide more comprehensive services for families. After just 10 months of work we are already seeing positive results. Among the population of pregnant clients initially enrolled, we are demonstrating increasing success with engaging women earlier in their pregnancy. We are addressing their health and social needs through multiple service pathways related to food insecurity, housing assistance, medical referrals, and behavioral health. We also ensure that clients are connected to critical prenatal healthcare services that are so important to healthy birth outcomes. As a result of these care coordination services, we are pleased to report that among the early group of women enrolled in Franklin County's Care Coordination Network who gave birth during 2016, 90% delivered healthy weight babies. Senate Bill 332 will help ensure similar success throughout the state as new HUBs develop and existing HUBs increase their capacity to serve more clients.

Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 332. Passage of this bill will have far-reaching positive effects for Ohio families. This legislation offers communities an opportunity to begin their own Community Pathways HUB which is significant. Communities' ability to develop HUBs will spur statewide dialogue about how best to serve the most vulnerable among us.

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