

September 26, 2016

The Honorable Shannon Jones
Senate Building, 2nd Floor North, Room 222
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Senator Jones:

I am writing on behalf of University of Cincinnati Health (UC Health) in support of your bill, Senate Bill 332. This legislation is vitally important for improving the health of our community, our new moms and their babies.

As you know, Ohio's overall infant mortality rate puts us 45th in the nation – and the rate among our African American babies is even worse. Infant mortality is a devastating but preventable health crisis, and we applaud your leadership in pushing for state and local private-public partnerships to address the issue.

UC Health is committed to doing what we can to eradicate infant mortality in our community. As a Co-Founder of Cradle Cincinnati and the primary provider of women's services through the Cincinnati Health Department, we understand how imperative it is for a community to come together to address this issue. While there has been a 15% drop in infant deaths since the initiative launched three years ago, we believe there is more to be done.

Senate Bill 332 is this next step, and we appreciate the comprehensive nature of its scope. It is holistic and addresses many barriers we currently face in working with our moms and babies. We support the bill as written, including its focus on safe sleep education and training, smoking cessation, housing, prenatal care and home visiting.

Thank you for your continued focus and passion on this issue, and we look forward to working with you on passage of Senate Bill 332. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'William Hurford'.

Dr. William Hurford
Chief Medical Officer