

Testimony Before the Senate Medicaid Committee  
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Chairman Burke, Ranking Member Cafaro and members of the Medicaid Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to speak before you today. My name is Norman Wolfe. I am a former homeless vet whom is now the Co – chair of Northern Ohioans for Budget Legislation Equality. I am here to talk to you today about the need to protect adequate health care for homeless individuals.

Since I have gained stable housing, I have worked with homeless coalitions, homeless shelters, and homeless individuals to try and make their lives easier. Becoming homeless is a situation that can happen to anyone and once it does it can have an impact on an individual's mental and physical health. The state provides money to mental health organizations to help those whom have developed mental health issues from such a trying situation. The state has sought to address the need for adequate healthcare by accepting Medicaid Expansion that would include single adults.

While we applaud you for funding these programs, I am here today to ask you to not consider adding co – pays, premiums, or consider the health savings account to Medicaid Expansion recipients. Medicaid Expansion was intended to provide healthcare options for homeless and low income individuals. By providing healthcare to homeless individuals, you provide the first step to sustainability. Adding co – pays and monthly premiums endangers the ability of low income and homeless individuals to access healthcare provided by Medicaid Expansion. As such, you will force individuals to once again use emergency rooms as a primary source of care because they cannot afford the monthly premiums nor the co – pays associated with doctor or hospital visits.

I am here today to ask you not to attach co – pays or premiums to Medicaid Expansion recipient's benefits. We want to make sure that health care is accessible to everyone no matter your economic situation.

Thank you for your time and I welcome any questions.