

**Jared M. Pollick, CEO of Third Street Family Health Services in Mansfield
Testimony on HB 49 - House Finance Subcommittee on Health and Human Services
March 16, 2017**

Good afternoon Chairman Romanchuk, Ranking Member Sykes and members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Health and Human Services. My name is Jared Pollick, and I am the CEO of Third Street Family Health Services (TSFHS). Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 49.

Third Street Family Health Services provides comprehensive primary and preventative care to residents of Richland County and the surrounding counties. We are Joint Commission accredited as a Patient Centered Medical Home in Ambulatory Healthcare and Behavioral Healthcare.

In 2016, Third Street Family Health Services provided services to 16,659 unduplicated patients through 72,878 patient visits. This is a growth from 13,443 patients and 56,168 visits pre-expansion. A total of 3 new full-time, year round locations were opened during the past year along with 1 mobile unit for obstetrical services and 1 school based health center serving the Mansfield City Schools, located inside Mansfield Senior High. Additionally, TSFHS has begun employing Community Health Workers to assist individuals' issues regarding the social determinants of healthcare within Richland and the surrounding counties.

Ohio made the right choice to extend Medicaid health insurance coverage to some of our most vulnerable citizens. I see the impact of our patients being connected to health coverage each and every day. The hospital system in Richland County attributed a 10% reduction in Emergency Room usage in 2016 to access of primary care provided by TSFHS.

Medicaid expansion has meant the access and utilization of services for individuals previously unable to obtain such treatment through usual, cost effective methods. Not only has it strengthened TSFHS to expand primary medical, dental and behavioral services, but it has also allowed us to expand our Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) program to 4 of our sites with a 5th to go live in the next month. Currently, we provide care to 184 active MAT patients of which 167 are patients on Medicaid. This amounts to 91% of the enrollment in our MAT program.

If Medicaid Expansion were no longer available it would push a large volume of these people seeking treatment within our system out and back onto street drugs. Our staff at TSFHS screens patients through Screening and Brief Interventions and Referrals to Treatment (SBIRT). We constantly engage our patients to root out deeper causes for physical health problems. Maintaining the expansion is essential to these cost saving methods being continued.

Sustainability of our patient-centered model of care relies on a vibrant workforce. That is why the FQHC Primary Care Workforce Initiative was created (commonly referred to as PCWI). PCWI, housed at the Ohio Department of Health, helps to alleviate the challenge of recruiting and retaining quality providers and expose students to advanced primary care in Community Health Center practices. If we connect Ohioans to coverage without increasing primary care capacity – hence reliance on the Emergency Departments and/or other costly settings for non-emergency care – we have done nothing to improve patient outcomes or bend the cost curve.

As introduced, funding for PCWI will be cut by 10%. At my health center, staff was able to work with 27 4th year dental students, 11 Advanced Practice Nurses and 1 Social Work student. Any cut to this program will hinder the momentum we've gained. Keeping all of our students in our state and providing services to our patients is an important step in controlling healthcare costs.

We respectfully ask that our PCWI line item be restored and the added mandate allocating funds away from PCWI be struck so that we can continue to teach, inspire and put to work the next generation of primary care providers.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify on HB 49 and its impact on Third Street Family Health Services and the patients and community we serve. I am happy to answer any questions you have at this time.