

Testimony of Karen Gorby- “WRITTEN ONLY”
Mother of Dustin Gorby with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia
HB49 as Introduced by the Governor
House Finance- Health and Human Services Subcommittee
March 23, 2017

Chairman Romanchuk, members of the HHS Subcommittee, thank for you the opportunity to provide testimony on the CMH- Children with Medical Handicaps, also known as the “BCMh” program.

I am Karen Gorby. I live in East Palestine, Ohio. I am married with two children. My child was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia.

In 2012, our life as we knew it would change in just one weekend. Our youngest son at the age of 16 was diagnosed with ALL (Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia). His treatment would be 3 years and 3 months. Watching my child go through all the needle pokes, spinal taps, surgeries, taking medicines, throwing up, and losing his hair was the hardest thing in my life. As parents, you just want the very best for your child. The first weekend when we were diagnosed, Doug Palmer came into our hospital room and handed us a stack of papers to fill out and in those papers, was the forms for BCMH. At that time, I didn’t realize how important it was to fill them out. In about 3 months we had went through our whole savings paying for copayments, prescriptions, gas, and food. We have a box of our medical bills and prescriptions. In that box, there is one bill for \$78,929, one for \$105,000, and one for AirBear that is \$23,000. At one point, I added all the bills up totaling over \$350,000. Without BCMH, we would have had to file bankruptcy. We would have never been able to pay for the medical expenses we had encountered. We are here asking and even begging you to please leave BCMH the way it is. Parents should not have to decide whether to make a house payment, buy groceries, or to pay for our children’s prescriptions or copays. Our focus should be our child getting better. We still are going to oncology appointments, and he will need knee replacements before long. Our children didn’t ask to be sick. Moving forward or relying on Medicaid is of little worth due to administrative and governmental red tape. When seeking Medicaid assistance, we were immediately and rudely denied. BCMH quickly processed our application for assistance and provided us with financial relief so that we could focus and care for our son without any additional monetary stress. BCMH not only provides payment for all of my son’s medical services but more importantly provides us with compassion and concern. For this well-being and ours, I pray members of this panel never experience what we’ve been through. Please tell me you wouldn’t hinge the hope of Medicaid as opposed to BCMH.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, thank you for protecting Ohio’s children by allowing the CMH program to continue providing services to middle- and low-income families. Thank you for the opportunity to share my family’s story and I would be happy to answer any questions. Thank for your time and consideration.