

Senate Finance Health and Medicaid Subcommittee

Testimony

By Margo Spence

May 17, 2017

Chairman Hackett, Vice Chair Tavares and members of the Senate Finance Health and Medicaid Subcommittee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify today. My name is Margo Spence and I am the President/CEO of First Step Home, Inc., a member of the Mental Health & Addictions Advocacy Coalition and several other state organizations. We are located in Southwest Ohio, however, we provide services to women and women with children from numerous counties throughout the state. We allow women to bring their children with them as they receive residential drug and alcohol treatments, intensive out-patient treatment services with housing and then stand-alone housing with access to traditional outpatient treatment. We serve over 400 women per year through these programs. At least 80% of the women we serve, have a mental health disorder in addition to their addiction as well as physical health issues. 90% are addicted to heroin. A high percent of the women we serve enter our services at late term pregnancy or postpartum. 95% of the women we serve are Medicaid clients. As a result of Medicaid Expansion, more women have been able to access care – not only through our Agency but others as well. Those women who have received coverage through Medicaid expansion receive not only residential and outpatient treatment through our agency, but also for other services such as Medication Assisted Treatment as more providers are now accepting Medicaid for this service. Historically this was a cost absorbed by our Agency as we recognized the value/ help it provided to our women receiving treatment and aiding in their recovery. This cost alone to our Agency was in excess of \$50,000 per year.

For the past year, we have been actively preparing for the BH Redesign by attending trainings, reviewing the proposed manuals, working with our vendors and developing a clinical process as well as a modified business model. We believe the integration of physical health and behavioral health through the BH Redesign will be beneficial to the high risk women we serve. We will however need adequate time to make sure our assumptions are on target. The following are several areas of concern for sustainability to our Agency:

- Cash Flow-First Step Home could not with stand any delay in our payment.
- Work force-We are finding it a challenge to recruit the Medical Staff as required
- IT vendor is working work-will not make July 1st implementation date
- The reduction in the group rate for traditional outpatient services will potentially force us to reduce the number of clients served

As a small agency, it will take time to make appropriate changes to our clinical and business model. We are requesting that the implementation date for the BH Redesigned be delayed in order to continue to sustain access and quality care for the women and women with children we serve.

Thank you for your time. I welcome any questions you may have.

