

My name is Marylynn Solomon. I am from Cleveland, Ohio.

I am here to talk about Medicaid and public transportation. I have almost always qualified for Medicaid when I worked and now that I am on disability for mental illness. Recently a combined Medicaid/Medicare program was started that I joined in Care Source called My Care Ohio. I no longer have to pay a copay on my prescriptions and I don't have to pay for Medicare Part D premium. Care Source is a great plan. It is not confusing at all - very simple. And when I call in for transportation to the doctors, I can choose bus tickets rather than to get a ride which I choose as I take the bus everywhere I need to go and limit asking my son to take me to out of the way places or when I have to get a lot of things that are heavy.

I decided it was more cost effective for me to use public transportation rather than to have to scrimp in order to buy, insure and maintain a car so I gave my car up a number of years ago and began using RTA which I had used from 1976 through the 1990's. I noticed right away that the buses don't come as often or go out as far as they used to and the cost is a lot more. I remember paying 10 cents when I first started riding the bus and you got up to 2 transfers.

Really the only ways the bus is affordable for me is because I have a disability card so I pay 1/2 the fare, plus Care Source sends me day passes for each doctor appointment I have. I need to take anywhere from 1 to 3 buses to get to my various appointments, taking from a 1/2 hour to two hours one way.

I don't like to complain. I like to work with what I have, but I have a dreadful feeling that my dear RTA is being put through a slow, painful death due to the lack of funding in the first place and taking away funding on top of that.

We need public transportation. Not only is it more economical than having a private car, but it is a very healthy option. Walking to the bus stops is good for the health of the rider and every car no longer needed on the road is a health benefit to the entire community of people, physically and mentally. Not only is there less air pollution, but imagine the traffic everyone would have to deal with if the bus riders were in private cars instead.

The bus is also good for my mental health as I feel calmer on a bus. I don't have to worry about someone trying to cut in front of me. Also, I enjoy being amongst all the other people on the bus. I like the feeling of being in the community as I am riding to my destination.

Please, at the very least, bring public transportation dollars back to their current amount and actually I would like you to consider giving more funds to public transportation as it is worth more funding as it is a benefit to the whole community. And please maintain the Medicaid program as it currently is.

Thank you for your time and attention to my concerns.