

**May 17, 2017**

**Chairman Hackett, Vice Chair Tavares and members of the Senate Finance Subcommittee on Health and Medicaid, my name is Arthur Hickman. Thank you for hearing my testimony today. I am here to tell you about the services I have received from The Center for Disability Empowerment. CDE is one of 12 Centers for Independent Living in Ohio.**

**When I first met The Center for Disability Empowerment I had been in a nursing home for 7 months because I had a stroke and hip replacement. I was at Heartland Village Nursing Home in Columbus.**

**The HOME Choice Program and CDE helped me to leave Heartland and move into an apartment. CDE helped me to get a couch, lamp, bed and other things I needed. CDE's Community Connector, Derek Mortland, met with me at least twice a week to help me manage my bills and work on a budget. He took me to Food pantries, and then showed me how to get there on my own in the future. Because of my stroke things took a lot of time for me.**

**Derek took me to a disability Recreation Expo where I met a lot of people with disabilities from all walks of life. It made me feel right at home. We fished. I caught about 15 and I took them home. I volunteered to help set things up and tear things down at the event. When I was able to help someone else it made me feel good. I love people. I'm a people person. Derek became my mentor, friend and brother and I wouldn't change that for the world.**

**Today I go on bike rides, take walks, go to the library and to Walmart and Dollar Tree to shop. I have a girlfriend now. We have been together for 11 months. I go to church, The New Journey Christian Ministry on Cleveland Ave in Columbus. I help with Audio and Video there.**

**None of this would be possible if I were still in the Nursing Home. I thank God all the time. He didn't bring me this far to leave. I never thought my life could be like this when I was in the Nursing Home. It's hard to explain. The Center for Disability Empowerment brings a valuable service to people with disabilities in this community. They are learning tool. And they are still helping me. Thank you for your time. I would be happy to answer any questions.**