

Testimony of the Rev. David L. Hoffman
Finance Health and Medicaid Subcommittee
Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Chairman Hackett, Vice Chair Tavares, and Members of the Finance Health and Medicaid Subcommittee,

My name is Rev. David Hoffman I live in Marion County, and I serve on the BCMH Parent Advisory Council. I stand before you this morning representing the more than 40,000 children covered under the Ohio Department of Health's Children with Medical Handicaps program. BCMH is a vital safety-net program for many families including my own. Our daughters, Andrea and Alyson, are living with the life-limiting disease -- cystic fibrosis -- and we rely upon the program to help us to manage and afford their complex, expensive, and specialized care. We are privately insured, but as many families with these kinds of diseases will tell you, insurance --whether it be private or public -- is not enough. Just to give you a brief glimpse into our daughter's lives...they each take over twenty pills and spend an hour and a half in breathing and vest treatments each day just to stay healthy and fight this devastating disease. The disease affects the lungs and the digestive system -- clogging their organs with thick, sticky mucus. They did nothing to deserve this genetic condition, but they are doing everything that they can to improve their lives. Their story was chronicled recently on NBC 4, Columbus.

The Governor's budget included a proposal to significantly change this program and make families like ours ineligible and without necessary supports. Losing these supports would put both access and needed services in jeopardy.

Your colleagues in the House heard concerns from families like mine and have removed these proposed changes to the program. I ask you to protect these vital services for Ohio's most vulnerable children by joining your House colleagues in rejecting the Administration's proposed changes and support the House language to protect this program and keep it appropriately funded.

BCMh has partnered with our family since our daughters were diagnosed. Cystic fibrosis is one of the costliest conditions covered under this program. Due to successful research, coordinated caring networks, and adherence to treatment and therapy, those living with cystic fibrosis are living longer and stronger lives. In fact, we now have more adults than children surviving this disease. In an attempt to support these young adults, BCMh also covers limited services for those with cystic fibrosis who are over 21 years of age. BCMh covers 300 cystic fibrosis adults. Again, acknowledging that private and public insurance is not enough and doesn't cover everything for those living with cystic fibrosis needs.

In addition to preserving the program, I am asking for support of an amendment, that will be offered by Senator Jay Hottinger to support a minimal increase in the Targeted Health Care Services-Over 21 line item (440507) that supports young adults living with cystic fibrosis. This request was not made of the House and was overlooked in the budget language. These additional dollars will avoid changes in eligibility and services.

I would be happy to answer any questions.