



**Testimony to the Ohio Senate Finance Health and Medicaid Subcommittee – HB 49
May 24, 2017**

Thank you Chairman Hackett, Vice Chair Tavares and committee members. I am Judith Warren, Chief Executive Officer of Health Care Access Now. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today in support of SB 332 and to share comments regarding proposed amendments in HB 49. Health Care Access Now (aka HCAN) is a Level 1 Certified Pathways Community Hub based in Cincinnati and covers Hamilton, Butler and Clermont counties with two key services – Pregnancy Care Coordination and Chronic Disease Care Coordination. Our clients are primarily Medicaid and Medicare adults or the uninsured that experience higher rates of morbidity due to multiple social and environmental factors – substandard housing, unemployment or lack of steady employment, lack of access to regular primary or specialty care and inadequate access to public transportation. These are daily challenges or barriers that clients deal with on a daily basis and that impact their health status.

Our Hub employs Certified Community Health Workers who have completed Associate Degree programs at local community colleges. HCAN will be launching another certification program this fall to meet the demand/need for more Community Health Workers and fill positions at agencies that we contract with to deliver essential community-based care coordination services. In our market, CHWs are earning between \$13.25 - \$13.75/hour with benefits. All of the Certified Community Health Workers must successfully pass a certification exam administered by the Ohio Board of Nursing.



Regarding the proposed changes to language in HB 49 that refers to SB 332, I offer the following:

1. As a Certified Pathways Community Hub, we believe that standardization of care coordination services by using evidenced-based processes and standards ensures that providers are following consistent protocols. This ensures that Medicaid recipients will benefit from an approach that not only identifies needs but fixes the problems or at least creates an individualized action plan. The use and fidelity to evidenced-based processes is a consistent requirement for agencies that we work with. We complete regular QI checks and staff development.
2. Currently, we contract with the Cincinnati Health Department and they assign public health nurses or social workers as supervisors for community health workers to work with pregnant Medicaid women and their infants. **The original language in SB332 does not prohibit a public health department or public health nurse from implementing the hub model and pursuing certification.** Currently, Mahoning County Health Department is pursuing national certification and implementing the nationally recognized evidenced-based model.

We contract with four Ohio Medicaid managed care plans and receive payment for community-based care coordination services delivered by local public health and social service agencies. We partner with case management teams from each of the plans to ensure that Medicaid recipients receive additional services if it is determined that they are



medically high risk – preterm delivery, lost to follow-up, need behavioral health or other specialty services or simply not aware of the plan benefits.

3. If a public health entity pursues operating as a qualified community hub, then adoption of evidenced-based standards and processes should be required. A certified hub is more than just a centralized clearinghouse. We are diligent and intentional to ensure that care coordination services and contracts stay in compliance; we use a HIPAA compliant data system to collect common metrics that identify and track risk factors and report outcomes to payers and our partner agencies on a monthly basis. And we collaborate to access community resources in order to avoid/reduce duplication of services with county agencies and other entities.

Certified Pathways Community Hubs are a model that can deliver better health and reduce health care costs not only for pregnant women but other population groups that lack knowledge and positive experiences in seeking health care and resolving barriers to care.

Thank you,

Judith Warren, CEO

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