



**Ohio House of Representatives**  
**House Insurance Committee**  
**June 8, 2020**

Chairman Brinkman, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Boggs and members of the House Insurance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written proponent testimony for House Bill 611.

With patient care, research, and education as our foundation, UC Health is at the forefront of medicine. We conduct groundbreaking research that leads to new treatments and cures, train the next generation of physicians and medical professionals, and pioneer new ways to deliver highly specialized, complex subspecialty care that would not otherwise be available to patients in our region. In addition to our focus on delivering better, safer and smarter care, we also commit to our community's health, improving the physical and economic health of our community.

As an original co-founder of Cradle Cincinnati, a collaborative effort between parents, caregivers, healthcare professionals, and community members committed to reducing infant mortality in southwest Ohio, we are deeply invested in ensuring that every mom and babe has a healthy birth outcome.

Here in Hamilton County we know that black babies are 3 times more likely to die than white babies. This is unacceptable.

We know that skilled professionals such as doulas, working alongside mothers during their pregnancies, have the ability to make a real impact on these families. Every day, doulas provide holistic support to pregnant women to deliver full-term healthy babies, achieving equitable birth outcomes. Doulas provide health education, engagement, support (physical and emotional) and advocate for systems change for the women they serve. Black doulas provide a critical service providing pregnancy and labor support for birthing people of color who experience higher rates of poor birth outcomes. Research shows that racial disparities exist even after accounting for social and economic factors. We have heard from the black women that we serve that having a doula for support during this stressful time is something they desire in order to help combat these outcomes.

House Bill 611, which will allow Medicaid to reimburse for doula services, would expand the access to this much needed service for the women we serve at UC Health. We know that pregnancy is a high stress time for women and adding this service to the prenatal and postpartum care we provide to our patients will allow us to expand the support we provide and help women achieve healthy births.

UC Health strongly supports this bill and its passage would contribute to measurable reductions in infant mortality within our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Evie Alessandrini'.

Evie Alessandrini, MD, MSCE  
Senior Vice President & Chief Medical Officer  
UC Health

