



Senate  
Finance Subcommittee on Health and Medicaid  
Hospital Council of Northwest Ohio 2020-21 Budget Testimony  
Thursday, May 16, 2019 at 9:00 am

**Ohio Commission of Minority Health Funding:  
Panel on the Certified Pathways Community HUB Model  
to Reduce Infant Mortality and Address Health Disparities  
Carly Salamone, MPH, Assistant Director, Northwest Ohio Pathways HUB  
Hospital Council of Northwest Ohio**

Good afternoon Chairman Hackett, Ranking Minority Member Thomas and esteemed members of the Senate Finance Subcommittee on Health and Medicaid. My name is Carly Salamone, and for the last 9 years I have served as the Assistant Director of the Northwest Ohio Pathways HUB.

Increasing funding to the Ohio Commission of Minority Health will help to bring the certified Pathways Community HUB model to scale in Ohio communities that are experiencing the highest rates of infant mortality.

The Northwest Ohio Pathways HUB was one of the first three certified Pathways HUBs in the United States and the first certified HUB in Ohio. As the largest operating HUB in the country, we contract with 19 health, social service, and community organizations – including hospitals, minority-focused organizations, faith-based organizations and homeless shelters – that employ 45 CHWs. These CHWs work primarily with at-risk pregnant women to address health and health-related social needs. Care coordination is paid for through contracts with all five Ohio Medicaid managed care plans and other funders. The Ohio Commission of Minority Health has championed our HUB's development, as well as the development of the HUB network statewide, through funding and technical assistance.

You get what you pay for. At least 50% of the payments made to care coordination agencies in the HUB model are tied to outcomes. This drives organizations to solve problems, not just go through the process. The HUB drives the achievement of health outcomes that align with Medicaid quality standards.

And it's working. Buckeye Health Plan recently conducted a study of over 3,700 deliveries in Northwest Ohio between 2013 and 2017. What they found is that high-risk mothers NOT enrolled in the HUB were 1.55 times more likely to end up with a Neonatal ICU or Special Care Nursery admission than those enrolled in the HUB.

Additionally, for every dollar spent on HUB activities for members, there was a 236% (\$2.36 for every dollar invested) return on investment through the baby's first year of life.

The key to the HUB model is community health workers. In Ohio, CHWs are certified through the Ohio Board of Nursing. CHWs often are from the community they serve and have overcome the same struggles their clients experience. CHWs are partners, coaches and advocates for their clients. They use the approach, "Do For, Do with, and Cheer on!" in helping their clients become self-sufficient.

Today, there are more than 125 Ohio Board of Nursing certified CHWs working through the five (5) certified Pathways Community HUBs in Akron, Cincinnati, Mansfield, Toledo, and Youngstown that receive funding support from the Ohio Commission of Minority Health. More than 50% of these HUB CHWs represent minority groups, more than 40% were unemployed before becoming a CHW, and about 10% of HUB CHWs are former HUB clients.

Because the HUB is focused on the outcome – or connecting people to needed medical and social services – it facilitates partnerships with local housing authorities, public transportation, job and family services, and local employers to develop a fast-track for HUB clients. When a HUB develops solutions to these system barriers, it doesn't just benefit the clients of one agency, but it benefits the clients of all agencies connected to the HUB, which creates efficiencies.

In the case in the Northwest Ohio Pathways HUB, we find that connections for housing and transportation are the hardest to complete. To address this, we have partnered with our public transportation system and metropolitan housing authority to prioritize access to housing and transportation for pregnant women and families with children under age 1. As a result, in 2018, 561 participants secured a free annual bus pass and access to paratransit door-to-door services and 25 families now have a HUD Housing Choice Voucher. Communities are drawn to the HUB model because of its ability to align community resources around the families that need them the most.

Each certified HUB has demonstrated that HUB clients, who have on average 6 risk factors for poor health outcomes, have health outcomes similar or better than the health of the county where they live. This improvement is attributed to the support HUB clients receive from their CHWs, as well as the community resources aligned through the HUB to address the social determinants of health. In Northwest Ohio, we have seen improvements in full-term, healthy birth weight babies among our clients. Additionally, more of our clients are attending their prenatal care and post-partum visits, and we are measuring a lower infant mortality rates than the county overall.

Ohio Pathways Community HUBs will only have to prevent 40 NICU stays to fund a three-million-dollar budget for the Ohio Commission of Minority Health. By investing in the Ohio Commission of Minority Health to further the expansion of the Certified Pathways Community HUB model to all at-risk pregnant women, all of Ohio babies can celebrate their first birthday and beyond.

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