

**Ohio Senate Finance Subcommittee
on Health & Medicaid
May 16, 2019 Public Hearing**

**Testimony by Lynn Williams,
Contact Center
Cincinnati, Ohio**

Good afternoon. My name is Lynn Williams and I am a staff person representing the Contact Center located in Cincinnati, Ohio. Contact Center is a community, membership based organization that advocates for low-and moderate income people to have their basic human needs met for essentials of life. This includes health care because being able to see a doctor and a dentist are essential to having one's human needs met. Our organization also encourages civic participation of our members to have an input on public policy that directly affects their lives.

We are here to speak in support of Medicaid Expansion and to ask that those doing active job search be allowed to stay on Medicaid despite the work requirement recently approved by the federal CMS. We especially want to thank Governor DeWine for including Medicaid Expansion in his State Budget plan for Ohio, and for his words in his State of the State speaking in support of helping Ohioans who are experiencing difficult times in our State.

A majority of Contact Center's members receive health care through Medicaid. Some obtained Medicaid with the passage of Medicaid Expansion. Although I invited individuals to attend today, most were unable to attend this hearing because they are working at paid jobs or providing care to either children or disabled and elderly family members.

One of our lead members on Medicaid Expansion, Angie, could not be here because she is working, going to college and raising grandchildren as a kinship caregiver. Davina could not attend because she is providing child care for other mothers so they can work. Jerry Davis, likewise on Medicaid Expansion, is working at a paid job. He is an excellent example of someone who was unemployed and also lacked health care for many years. After Medicaid Expansion was implemented in Ohio he was able to get his health issues taken care of, including hypertension, a hernia and cataracts. Now he is a working taxpayer of Ohio whose life has significantly benefited by being able to get his medical surgeries taken care of, surgeries he was not taken to afford before Medicaid Expansion.

Jerry's story is an example of those who could be terminated from Medicaid because of the Medicaid work requirement approved for Ohio. Those looking for work could lose their health care coverage at a time when they need their health care to be able to be healthy in order to find employment.

Contact Center asks that people who meet the income eligibility and who are doing active job search be allowed to receive Medicaid.

I could tell more stories of our members who have been helped by Medicaid Expansion, including the following individuals who are members of the Contact Center. All of these individuals are either working, in training programs, doing active job search, or are now receiving Medicaid due to disability.

- a woman in her early fifties who was diagnosed with cancer and had radiation treatment, saving her life. She was able to keep her job.
- a woman in her fifties going blind in both eyes who had cataracts removed, saving her eyesight; she was able to continue in her job search program
- a man in his fifties diagnosed with hypertension and cancer who was helped and now has a new lease on life
- dental care for a man who had gone without dental care for years and was able to save his teeth from being removed
- ongoing thyroid medication for a woman in her forties to be able to continue job search and volunteer work hours at the Contact Center

In closing, Medicaid Expansion has been a literal lifesaver for people I know in the inner city neighborhoods of Cincinnati. I wish to thank Governor DeWine for including it as well as the Ohio House. Please support Ohio keeping it because it is turning human lives around in Ohio.