Health, Human Services & Medicaid Commitee

Ohio Senate

November 13, 2019

Chairman Burke, Ranking Member Antonio and Members of the Committee:

Good afternoon, my name is Steve Killpack and I'm from the Healthy Fathering Collaborative in Cleveland and the statewide Ohio Practitioners' Network for Fathers and Families.  I write in support of HB 11 and its significant efforts to improve health outcomes tied to infant mortality rates in Ohio. I am grateful to the co-sponsors, Representatives Manning and Howse, for introducing this important bill and to the Ohio House for passing the bill unanimously.  I write to urge the Senate Health, Human Services & Medicaid Committee to pass the bill this year.

I support the comprehensive approach in HB 11 to address four elements of pre-natal health-smoking cessation, dental hygiene, lead education, and group pre-natal care.

However, I believe that the current bill could be strengthened with more family-inclusive language requiring the engagement of fathers, partners and family caregivers in the four elements of pre-natal health.  As a Board Member of the Ohio Practitioners’ Network for Fathers and Families, a former Commissioner of the Ohio Commission on Fatherhood and Co-Chair of the Fatherhood Action Group of the Ohio Collaborative to Prevent Infant Mortality, I have been working for many years to promote the engagement and inclusion of fathers, partners and family members in maternal and child health programming.  The theoretical framework for father/partner inclusion is provided by Princeton’s Fragile Families and Child Well Being Study.  The study found that the time of pregnancy and birth is a “magic moment” for father/partner engagement AND that father/partner involvement is directly related to improved the health of both mothers and infants.

I’m attaching a brief document describing ways that educated involved fathers and partners improve maternal and infant health.  The document also provides information on how pre-natal and postnatal health care providers can engage fathers/partners.  I encourage you to review this information and incorporate some of this language in HB 11.

I am looking forward to supporting efforts to move the bill expeditiously through the committee process and a vote on the Senate floor so that the increased support for infant mortality efforts can take effect as soon as possible.

Respectfully,



Steven R Killpack MS

Executive Director, Healthy Fathering Collaborative

Founding Board Member, Ohio Practitioners’ Network for Fathers and Families