

## **People Working Cooperatively Testimony - Ohio House Finance Committee**

**March 21, 2023**

People Working Cooperatively performs critical home repairs and services so that Ohioans can remain in their homes living independently and healthier in a safe, sound environment. PWC's one of a kind core services provide critical resources literally saving existing housing and keeping residents safe. These services provide stability for families in neighborhoods, reduce blight, and help strengthen communities, all in a cost-effective manner. We restore heat in the winter, bring water to sinks, provide safe electricity, restore plumbing, and ensure that the roof does its job by keeping people dry.

This is what PWC does, but it only tells part of the story. It is understood as a component of social determinants of health that where you spend most of your time, likely your home, influences your health. If your environment, your home, is unhealthy, it has negative effects on your health. This applies to all of us, and is yet another reason why PWC's work is so important. We perform work that influences, sometimes significantly so, the health of the people we serve. PWC's work can sometimes prevent or at least reduce health problems before they happen.

Examples of these services include:

- While the heads of households are predominantly elderly, surprisingly almost 1/3 of the individuals we help are children. We remove poisonous lead from homes that otherwise would lead to severe and life-long negative consequences.

- On the other end of the spectrum, for our seniors, we do work that helps them “age in place”, such as reducing the risk of their falling in their home.
- For both young and old, PWC’s work can significantly lessen respiratory related problems – helping people with asthma to COPD. Asthma is the most chronic disease among Ohio children, and is the number one reason for pediatric emergency department visits.

As Ohio’s population continues to age, housing and assisted living facilities will be in short supply. Saving existing housing and extending Ohioans’ ability to remain safely and securely in their homes are by far the most important and cost-effective options available. No organization anywhere has more impact in this arena than PWC. PWC services touch thousands of individuals annually.

Also, PWC has expanded our reach to become a leader convening the healthcare, construction, education, government, and the nonprofit sectors to jointly solve problems related to the home-built environment. PWC excels in breaking down silos between these sectors creating better communication, cooperation and services.

A dollar invested in PWC has a huge impact on saving existing homes, improving health, reducing unnecessary expense for the healthcare system and the taxpayer.

## About People Working Cooperatively

For over forty years, PWC has worked our mission, helping tens of thousands of people stay safe and healthy at home. **We're improving lives by targeting the home environment.** When a home environment is safe and healthy, there's a huge ripple effect, resulting in better health for Ohioans young and old.

PWC's critical home repairs prevent many unhealthy situations from escalating to crisis level, taking pressure off Ohio's critical public health resources. Other vital home safety and home repair needs include fall prevention, reducing childhood asthma triggers and abating lead paint issues. Our work helps stabilize neighborhoods and health. **Our proven approaches save taxpayer and healthcare dollars.**

### Improving health—and saving money

- 44% of those we serve report improved health\*
- 15% sought medical attention less frequently\*
- 40% reduction in falls when evidence-based education and our whole home services are combined
- Every dollar invested in reducing lead hazards saves at least \$17 \*\*



Safe & Healthy  
at Home

\*Independently conducted Impact Study by the Cadmus Group and the University of Cincinnati Center for Economics.

\*\*National Center for Health Housing - <https://nchh.org/resource-library/FFF-Action-Drive-Transition-Documents/Admin-Version.pdf>; Published study in Environmental Health Perspectives: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2717145/>

## Our Mission

People Working Cooperatively performs critical home repairs and services so that low-income homeowners can remain in their homes living independently and healthier in a safe, sound environment.



PWC's approach is agile, collaborative and focused.  
Our work significantly improves the health of Ohioans and saves taxpayer and healthcare dollars.

## Proven solutions

The Innovation Center delivers cost-effective solutions for improving life at home and addressing the health challenges that Ohioans face. We actively collaborate with public and private organizations to break down silos, reduce the duplication of efforts and align resources with the State of Ohio's priorities.

Challenge	PWC Solution
Our senior population is growing dramatically. Falls are the leading cause of injury-related death among older adults, and the majority of falls occur at home. Our housing stock is aging and so are our residents, resulting in a \$1.8 billion problem that is growing every year.	Evidence-based education and in-home fall prevention modifications for seniors, plus a referral network that connects seniors to these services during a doctor's visit. This model is now being piloted by COH for statewide expansion.
Asthma is the #1 reason for pediatric Emergency Department visits. Asthma is the most common chronic disease among Ohio children, affecting 190,000 kids (and nearly 1 million Ohioans overall).	Pilot program with Cincinnati Children's Hospital to address environmental triggers in homes, tracking improved patient outcomes. This is a scalable model suitable for deployment across Ohio.
Ohio has the 2nd highest rate of children with elevated blood lead levels in the country (5.2%), more than twice the national average. Nearly all lead poisoning happens at home. This preventable problem has life long effects.	Inspections, abatement and education: a three-pronged approach in a one-stop enrollment program for families, streamlining services and speeding up response times; inserting intervention points to target prevention/reduction of lead poisoning—before symptoms emerge.



PWC and PWC's Whole Home Innovation Center provide critical home repairs, home-health programs, education and modifications to help more Ohioans live safe and healthy at home.

2024	2025	2026
<b>\$4 Million</b>		
Medicaid Savings	Medicare Savings	Improved Education
Aging in Place	Fall Prevention	Cross-sector Partnership
Asthma Reduction	Healthy at Home	Scaling Direct Service
Reduced Health Care Costs	Lead Paint Remediation	Igniting Business Opportunities

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