

Dr. Kyle Jackson
Interested Party Testimony, HB33
House Finance Subcommittee on Health and Human Services
March 21, 2023

Chair Carruthers, Ranking Member Liston, and Members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Health and Human Services-

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to present my testimony regarding House Bill 33.

My name is Kyle Jackson and I am a practicing pediatric dentist in private practice in the Dayton area. I am currently the Vice President of the Ohio Academy of Pediatric Dentistry and Immediate Past President of the Dayton Dental Society, as well as, an ordained minister. For me dentistry is not only a vocation, but a calling. I see it as a ministry and I consider it an honor to provide care to thousands of children on Medicaid in my practice. I believe that all the children that come to my practice (and their parents/guardians) receive exceptional care and deserve to be treated with compassion and respect. I first became a Medicaid provider in 1991 at my first practice inside Dayton Children's Hospital. I remember the last time we had a fee increase it was over twenty years ago. It was not much, but it helped me stay open. However, the cost of doing business has increased dramatically over the past two decades, and especially over the past three years, making it very difficult for my associates and I to provide the care these children deserve.

I recently had the opportunity to meet with a couple younger pediatric dentists who practice about an hour south of me. They reached out to me because they want to start a clinic that serves the medicaid population. Like me, they view serving the underserved as a ministry. Their biggest question was whether or not their business could stay afloat and remain open when treating Medicaid patients. Sadly, with the current reimbursement rates, it is highly unlikely that they could succeed. Although I regularly advocate for more providers to see Medicaid patients, I needed them to understand that the only way I am able to treat the Medicaid population is by also seeing paying patients. As private practitioners, our dental offices are also small businesses, with staff and operating costs required to continue serving patients. There are other dentists, like these two, who desperately want to treat the Medicaid population; however, in Ohio it is very hard to succeed financially.

I love treating the Medicaid population in Ohio, but find myself at a crossroads. Due to the low reimbursement rates, several years ago we had to discontinue taking new patients on Medicaid. We make exceptions for those with the most extensive dental needs that require sedation or general anesthesia that a pediatric dentist is best suited to provide. Now, with the tremendous increase in the cost of providing dental care and the limited number of dental auxiliaries and dental hygienists, we are losing money. We are at a point where we will likely need to completely discontinue providing care to children on Medicaid in order to remain open. I find it heartbreaking that it has come to this. I have been in practice long enough that I am seeing the children and grandchildren of former patients. I have watched these kids grow into loving

mothers and fathers who want their children to see me because they know my doctors and I will provide them with the same compassion and care that they experienced. We are their dental home, and no one wants to turn people away from their home.

I humbly request that you consider an increase in Medicaid reimbursement for dental providers that is closer to the usual and customary fees that traditional insurance provides, that is more in line with our neighboring states. It is hard to hear colleagues, who are Medicaid providers, talk about the difficulties to make payroll due to low reimbursement rates, but I am heading in the same direction. Please consider helping us help those who are so often underserved in our communities by going beyond the 15% fee increase that is currently on the table. It is the only way we will be able to continue caring for the children and adults in our communities that rely on us to keep them out of pain and out of the emergency rooms. Our patients rely on us to extend to them the same level of care all people deserve. Please help us continue to provide this patient care.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kyle Jackson