

Senate Finance Committee
May 24, 2023

Diana O'Brien
Mom, Guardian for 27-year-old triplets with autism
Proponent Testimony, HB33

Chair Dolan, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Ohio Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today on HB33, which includes a proposed increase in Medicaid reimbursement for dentists. I am aware that Medicaid dental reimbursement rates have not had a major increase in 20 years and want to share my story about how difficult it has been to access needed oral health care as your committee deliberates the biennium budget.

Twenty-seven years ago, my husband and I had triplets, Andrew, Kelly, and Megan. As with all parents, it was the most joyous moment of our lives. Just before they turned three years old, they were diagnosed with autism. And that was truly one of the most challenging moments of our lives. We see ourselves as blessed by their precious lives, but I can assure you it has been an unexpected, and difficult road. They have been denied services, ignored, restrained at school, and finding suitable medical care and dental care for them has been tough. They are adults today, unable to communicate verbally, and we pay privately to have all three grown adults see their former pediatric dentist because we can't find a dentist who will treat them. We need to encourage the dental and medical professionals who treat the most vulnerable. They need extra time with the health professional, and they need caring professionals who are recognized for going above and beyond.

Senator Dolan, I encourage you to vote to increase Medicaid dental reimbursement rates so that Ohioans can access the care they need to lead healthy, productive lives.

Sincerely,



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