



CHARITABLE HEALTHCARE NETWORK

Ohio: Stronger. Healthier. Together.

Jason Koma, MHA
Senate Health Committee
Testimony on HB 33 (SFY 2024-25 Operating Budget)
May 10, 2023

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Johnson and Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Senate Health Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 33. I am Jason Koma, the executive director of the Charitable Healthcare Network.

Formerly known as the Ohio Association of Free Clinics, the Charitable Healthcare Network is the statewide association of free and charitable providers in Ohio. Our mission is to support our 53 members by working to strengthen and ensure high-quality healthcare for people who are vulnerable in our state. Our membership is diverse including free clinics, charitable clinics, rural health centers, charitable pharmacies, and counseling centers, among others. As of 2023, our 53 member organizations serve 70 of Ohio's 88 counties.

Our member clinics and charitable providers are the backbone of the safety net in Ohio. As a nonclinical professional who has spent the last 15 years supporting healthcare delivery in Ohio, I have often used the mantra, both with colleagues I have worked with and external stakeholders, that those we serve are not having their best day. No one wakes up, wants to be sick and wants to have to seek care. It's just not a great day. Now imagine that day if you have no idea where you can go for care and you certainly can't pay for it. That is where Ohio's free and charitable providers come into play. When you have nowhere else to go, we are there for you. That is why, Ohio's free clinics and charitable providers are an essential part of the healthcare delivery system.

We also could not do this without the support of the Ohio General Assembly, the Ohio Department of Health and the governor's office. This support includes general revenue funds through the Free Clinic Safety Net line item with the Ohio Department of Health. We are extremely thankful to the Ohio House for increasing this line item from \$1.5M to \$1.75M per fiscal year. This funding is a lifeblood to our members and this increase means that many clinics will be able to keep their doors open and others can expand their reach.

With the support from that funding, in 2022, Ohio's free and charitable providers delivered nearly 560,000 healthcare services – primary care, specialty care, prescriptions, education and

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social services, among others, and that care was valued at approximately \$200M worth of healthcare services delivered to the most vulnerable in our state for little to no cost to those patients. These providers cannot do so without your support so it is essential that the state of Ohio continues to partner with CHN to keep our healthcare safety net as strong as possible. We are asking for your continued support of the Free Clinic Safety Net Services line item as passed by the Ohio House.

I'd like to close with two quick stories from those who we helped in 2022:

When Jane (name changed) came to our free health center and staff told her she had Type II Diabetes, she became visibly overwhelmed. Jane said she is the sole caregiver for her grandchildren, she could not work because of knee pain caused by her obesity, and one of her close friends recently died from a heroin overdose. Jane did not feel she could face one more obstacle in her life. Staff and volunteers developed a comprehensive treatment plan for Jane that included routine medical visits, work with a dietician, smoking cessation, and work with a behavioral health counselor. Now, Jane has lost weight, quit smoking, needs fewer medications, no longer has knee pain, and has started a job. Without our center, people in situations like Jane's would have nowhere else to turn.

A gentleman came to the clinic wanting help getting his prescriptions filled. He'd been in the hospital for a heart attack a couple of weeks ago. He had stints put in and was sent to a cardiologist for follow-up who adjusted the medications he was put on in the hospital. The new orders were sent to a pharmacy. The price list he brought for these 5 medications was almost \$1,000. When he came to us, he said he had \$4 and a ¼ tank of gas to his name. The patient also stated, "I'm just trying to stay alive." Turns out he's never seen a doctor, and had not had insurance since 2010. While he is currently unemployed, he had been a welder and fabricator for 34 years. After his marriage ended, he was working to get his life together. Then had the heart attack. He does not currently have a home. He is rotating staying with friends. He was seen and provided with five medications, all at no cost to him. He was then provided with food and some personal hygiene items from our little pantry. Although he was reluctant to take food that someone else may need more. He was also provided with gift cards to get gas so he could go look for a job. He said he came hoping for help with his medications but

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received much more. He was very appreciative of the kindness he received here, even in tears at one point.

These are just two brief examples of lives saved based on the work of the members of the Charitable Healthcare Network. That work cannot happen without your support.

Thank you and I'd be happy to answer any questions.

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CHARITABLE HEALTHCARE NETWORK

ABOUT

WHO WE ARE:

Charitable Healthcare Network's (CHN) purpose is to be the voice and connector for Ohio's free and charitable providers by providing resources, education, and advocacy to strengthen and ensure quality health care for vulnerable individuals across our state.

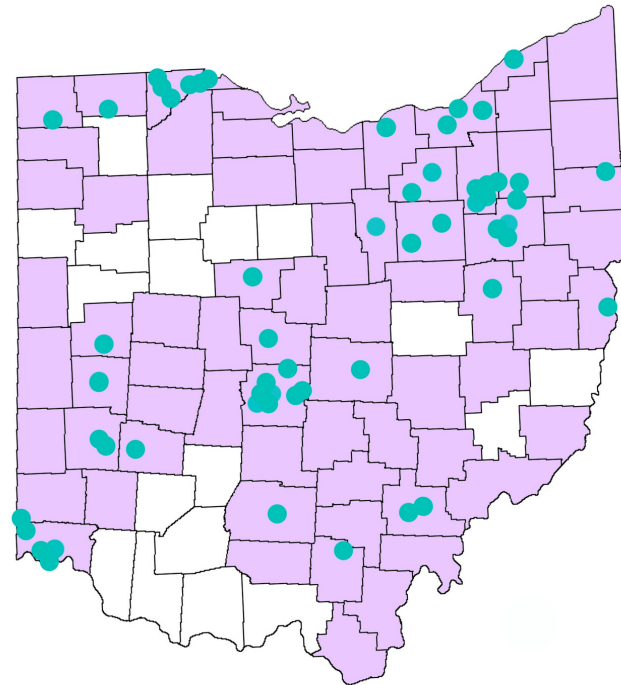
OUR MEMBERS:

Our membership is diverse including free clinics, charitable clinics, rural health centers, charitable pharmacies, counseling centers, and more! As of 2023, our 53 member organizations serve 70 of Ohio's 88 counties.

THE VALUE OF CARE



	2022 Services	Value of Services
Primary Care Visits	35,463	\$14,397,978.00
Specialty Visits	12,302	\$10,210,660.00
Vision Visits	7,155	\$2,547,180.00
Dental Visits	15,866	\$7,234,896.00
Behavioral Health	5,329	\$1,513,436.00
Social Services/ Case Management	10,839	\$1,820,952.00
Pharmacy Education	63,654	\$11,139,450.00
Lifestyle/ Prevention Education	15,455	\$2,318,250.00
Disease Management Education	21,630	\$3,655,470.00
Prescriptions	285,301	\$99,855,350.00
Laboratory Tests	69,661	\$20,898,300.00
Diagnostic Tests	14,855	\$22,282,500.00
TOTAL	557,510	\$198,452,522.00



■ Clinic Locations
■ Counties Served

STATEWIDE IMPACT & SUPPORT

CHN works directly with ODH to support free and charitable providers in Ohio with general revenue funds through the Free Clinic Safety Net line item. In the budget passed by the Ohio House, this funding was increased by \$250K to \$1.75M per fiscal year. With support from current state funding, Ohio's free and charitable providers delivered nearly \$200M worth of healthcare services to the most vulnerable in our state in 2022. It is essential that Ohio continues to partner with CHN to keep our healthcare safety net as strong as possible. We are asking for your continued support of Free Clinic Safety Net Services and the \$1.75M passed by the Ohio House.

PATIENT IMPACT

"We were able to provide antihypertensive and insulin therapy to a young pregnant woman that recently lost her job due to her health conditions. As a result of losing her job, she also lost her insurance coverage but is currently in a coverage gap as she navigates enrolling in Ohio Medicaid. The patient had uncontrolled blood pressure and gestational diabetes that put her and her unborn child at great risk for serious complications."

Sarah Adkins, Executive Director of Rising Suns Charitable Pharmacy

CONNECT WITH A FREE CLINIC

CHN is available as a resource for your office to help answer questions from your constituents seeking services from a free or charitable provider. Please contact us at **(614) 914-6458** and we can help connect anyone to this care. Also, our website www.charitablehealthcarenetwork.org has an interactive map of all these providers in Ohio.