



## OHIO JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES DIRECTORS' ASSOCIATION

37 West Broad Street, Suite 1120 | Columbus, Ohio 43215

614-221-3688

### Ohio Senate Medicaid Committee

Interested Party Testimony on Sub HB 33

May 11, 2023

Joel Potts, Executive Director, Ohio Job and Family Services Directors' Association

Chairman Romanchuk, Vice-Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Ingram, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss a few matters related to county departments of job and family services that we encourage you to consider in the Senate budget process.

County department of job and family service (CDJFS) agencies administer one of the largest health, human service, and workforce systems in the nation, with one in four Ohioans receiving assistance from the local office at any point in time. The CDJFS is responsible for administering programs to the state's most economically vulnerable citizens. Systems operated through the local agencies include cash assistance, food assistance, childcare, Medicaid (including long-term care, children's health insurance and services to aged, blind and disabled), adoption, adult protective services, child protective services, foster care, refugee services, local workforce initiatives and child support programs. It is the county's primary duty to ensure clients receive the services they need and are entitled to, as well as ensure program integrity.

I had the opportunity to testify earlier this week before some of you who also have the immense responsibility of serving on the Senate Health Committee as well as this committee. I will not repeat myself, as my remarks earlier this week focused on broader Job and Family Services-related matters. Today, I wanted to take this opportunity to address you as the thought leaders in the Senate on Medicaid specifically – particularly given the enormous challenge we are all facing now collectively as a state as we return to normal operations in redetermining Medicaid eligibility for the first time since 2020.

We are appreciative of the support the legislature showed the counties in appropriating \$30M of ARPA funds for this specific effort in December of 2022. Thus far, \$20M of these funds have been allocated to the counties. While counties were not able to have additional staff ready for the beginning of unwinding given the timing of the appropriation and allocation, many counties are relying on these funds for overtime being worked by their teams to keep timely with the work that goes into these redetermination efforts.

As we work with the Ohio Department of Medicaid to optimize the tools made available for counties to assist with the unwinding effort, one challenge we are bracing for is the inevitable new applications we will receive from individuals who have lost their coverage and reapply later this year – something we refer to as “churn” that is difficult to quantify on a state level but quite a significant demand on local operations. We know in the SNAP program, some counties who have been able to do their own analysis have a seen a churn of up to 50% and we don't have reason to anticipate less in the Medicaid program as of this point.

Focusing on the biennial budget, we were very pleased to see a ten percent funding increase to support SNAP eligibility efforts at the county level in the Executive budget proposal. Unfortunately, the funds were not allocated to the family assistance - local line item (ALI 600521) but were placed in the ODJFS

Program Operations line (ALI 600450), which took a \$23 million-dollar (10%) reduction in SFY 2024 in the House passed version. We are requesting the Senate adopt a clarifying, no-cost amendment that would make the budget more transparent; specifically, it would clearly denote the amount of funding to be allocated to the counties, as counties do not receive the entire 600521 line item, and would consolidate all the county funding in the proposed budget in the 600521 line item, rather than splitting it between two different line items as it stands today. No additional appropriations would be necessary.

Additionally, we request Senate support of clarifying language in the current version of the budget in Section 333.200 that we worked out with the Ohio Department of Medicaid and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services as it relates to the funding that county departments receive to conduct Medicaid eligibility and redeterminations. We are also pleased to see performance incentives and look forward to collaborating with ODM to develop effective measures with agreed-upon data.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to the committee. I am happy to answer any questions you have.