



Kinsey Jolliff
The MetroHealth System
SB 244 -Proponent Testimony
Senate Ways and Means Committee
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Chairman Blessing, Vice-Chair Roegner, Ranking Member Smith and members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support Senate Bill 244.

My name is Kinsey Jolliff and I serve as MetroHealth’s Vice President of Government Relations. MetroHealth is a super safety-net provider located in Cuyahoga County, which includes the City of Cleveland and its surrounding suburbs. Founded in 1837, MetroHealth has served Cuyahoga County longer than any other Cleveland healthcare organization.

MetroHealth believes that housing is key to improving the health and wellbeing of our patients and communities. When we address the need for housing, we make patients and communities stronger, more resilient, and more prosperous. When people don’t know where they will live from month to month or day to day, everything else- including healthcare appointments – takes a back seat. It’s the driving force behind our efforts to track non-clinical risk factors, such as housing, and help patients overcome those challenges by connecting them to safe and stable housing.

Specific to housing, here is what we have learned over the years:

- 21% of patients are at risk for housing instability (e.g., sometimes unable to pay the rent of mortgage on time).
- 56% of patients screening at risk for housing concerns have social risks in three or more other areas.
- Patients at risk for housing concerns are 13% more likely to have severe depression and 17% more likely to have moderate to severe anxiety (both are statistically significant).
- Patients at risk for housing challenges, are statistically more likely to miss primary care appointments – and 25% more likely to miss two primary care appointments within a year, and nearly 50% more likely to miss 10 or more primary care appointments than those who are not at-risk.
- 44% of those at risk for housing concerns are Medicaid beneficiaries.
- Patients with housing risk are disproportionately African American, unemployed or earning less than a living wage. 32% of all African Americans who were screened are at risk for housing instability. 33% of our patients at-risk for housing instability earn less than \$20,000/yr.
- Our research shows that pregnant women who lived in 3 or more locations within a year are 73% less likely to make all their prenatal appointments and 65% less likely to not make their postnatal visits. These women are 2.5 times more likely to have their child diagnosed with failure to thrive.



SB 244 will go a long way in reducing the risk of housing insecurity for our patients and the communities we serve. Over two thirds of the residents within the MetroHealth service area earn less than 80% of the area median income. Additionally, most of the census tracts in our area have over half of their populations with rents that exceed 50% of income. The tax relief proposed in the bill will make housing more affordable for our patients and neighbors and reduce the burden of housing insecurity. Most importantly, we truly believe the greatest impact of the bill will be to improve the health of our community.

We urge the Committee to pass this legislation. Thank you for allowing me to testify today.