

HB96

Interested party testimony

Maria Sutter

Peer Support and Advocacy Specialist at Linking Employment Abilities and Potential (LEAP)

Chair White, Vice Chair Salvo, Ranking Members Lett and Brewer, and Members of the Ohio Children and Human Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide interested party testimony regarding HB96 and Medicaid fiscal changes. My name is Maria Sutter, and I serve as the Peer Support and Advocacy Specialist at Linking Employment Abilities and Potential (LEAP).

Linking Employment, Abilities and Potential (LEAP) is an agent of positive change, working to advance participation and equality in society for people with disabilities in Northeast Ohio. LEAP's mission is to advance a society of equal opportunity for all persons, regardless of disability.

Medicaid is a vital program for millions of people in the United States. It provides access to healthcare for seniors and individuals with disabilities who would be forced to go without if Medicaid becomes limited or unavailable. Cutting funding for this program, would affect individuals who work hard to provide for themselves and their families but are still unable to afford basic healthcare. Moreover, including language in this bill that would cut funding for thousands of Ohioians based on funding cuts at the federal level would create untenable situations in many households across the state.

As a representative for many individuals in the northeast Ohio area, I hear countless stories about families who rely on Group VIII Medicaid. Many of these are families who have a family member with a disability and an additional family member who is caring for them. It is the caregiver who will be hit hardest. These caregivers spend untold paid and unpaid hours caring for their loved ones, but their financial compensation is not enough for them to comfortably afford insurance. Thankfully, they have been able to utilize Medicaid to receive their healthcare.

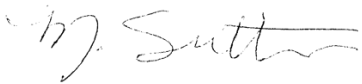
If “trigger” language remains in this bill, many caregivers will lose insurance. If these caregivers are unable to utilize Medicaid, they will be forced to allocate dollars for insurance that they do not have. They may also have to switch jobs outside the home and no longer be able to care for their family members with disabilities. These family members may be forced to leave the

community setting they are accustomed to living in and be relocated to institutional living. It is instances, the state would experience greater financial responsibility to care for individuals and institutions.

I ask this committee to modify the “trigger” language to allow individuals relying on Group VIII Medicaid to continue to have services.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide written testimony on HB96. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns at msutter@leapinfo.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "M. Sutter".

Maria Sutter

Peer Support and Advocacy Specialist

Linking Employment, Abilities, and Potential (LEAP)