



**House Children & Human Services Committee
House Bill 7 Proponent Testimony
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**Aparna Roy, MD, MPH, MBA
Chair of Pediatrics
The MetroHealth System**

Chair White, Vice Chair Salvo, Ranking Member Lett and members of the House Children & Human Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 7 which will dramatically increase accessibility to affordable, quality child care for our foster kids.

My name is Dr. Aparna Roy, and I serve as MetroHealth's Chair of Pediatrics and oversee our Foster Care Program. MetroHealth is a super safety-net provider located in Cuyahoga County, Ohio, 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 has partnered with Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to serve as the medical home for the county's foster kids since 2013. Cuyahoga County has the highest number of foster kids in Ohio with nearly 4,000 of the over 16,000 foster kids in the state residing in Cuyahoga County. These children are often coming from difficult situations and require comprehensive care and social service support. Our team composed our medical director, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, child psychologists, social workers, and care navigators coordinate all major aspects of medical and social needs to alleviate burdens on the children and foster parents.

All children in Cuyahoga County are required to receive a medical screening exam (triage) before being placed into foster care or changing foster homes. Because these situations can be unpredictable, the team is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to ensure the children and teens receive quality care any time of day or night. We make sure all of our kids receive comprehensive medical assessments (including mental health assessments), and regular, ongoing care (monthly until age 6 months, quarterly between ages 6 to 24 months; twice yearly at ages 24 months to 21 years). Receiving regular care is vital for long term health and development. Anything that alleviates burdens on our foster and kinship caregivers is tremendously beneficial for foster kids.

Guaranteeing child care for our foster and kinship caregivers regardless of income will not only provide much needed support for this special population, but it will also support families ability to balance the many needs of life like receiving regular medical care. Thank you to the House Children and Human Services Committee and Representatives White and Ray for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 7.