



March 12, 2025

Location: Ohio State House, Hearing Room 313

Chairperson: Rep. Stewart

Members of the Ohio House Finance Committee:

Good afternoon, Chairperson Stewart, and esteemed members of the Ohio House Finance Committee. It is a privilege to have the opportunity to address you today regarding the proposed cuts to the 340B Drug Pricing Program, a vital initiative that has significantly contributed to providing affordable healthcare to vulnerable populations across our great State of Ohio. My name is Tara Bair, and I represent Community Health & Wellness Partners, an organization dedicated to advocating for the health and well-being of 13,000 individuals in the rural areas of Champaign and Logan Counties.

Community Health & Wellness Partners is committed to delivering whole-person, patient-centered healthcare to every member of our community. Over the past decade, we have expanded our reach, growing from two sites in 2014 to nine, including five school-based health centers in both Champaign and Logan Counties. We offer comprehensive support to our primary care patients, integrating services such as behavioral health, pharmacy, chronic care management, nutrition, and social services to foster the well-being of both individuals and the community.

I would like to share three real-life examples that illustrate the benefits individuals in Ohio gain from Community Health Centers through their partnerships with 340B contract pharmacies. The financial benefits realized through the 340B program extend beyond just medication access.

**Diabetic Couple's Relief:** An underinsured husband and wife, during their diabetic follow-up appointments, expressed their inability to afford their \$1,500 monthly medication expenses. Through our partnership with a contract pharmacy in the 340B program, we were able to reduce their medication costs to \$150 per month. This significant reduction allowed them to afford other necessities. The husband said to his wife, now we can afford the diabetic shoes I need.

**Life-Saving Behavioral Health Services:** Forty years ago, a young lady was severely injured in a gas explosion at a local resort and is now wheelchair bound. As a user of our behavioral health services program, a program made possible through our 340B contract pharmacy partnership has been instrumental in her recovery and well-being. She recently said that CHWP saved my life.

**Impact of School-Based Health Centers:** A mother of six children found invaluable support through our school-based health center. The provider not only ensured the children's vaccinations and well-child visits but also identified serious health issues, leading to successful surgeries and treatment. Specifically, one of the children's kidneys was 95% blocked, had surgery and is now doing fantastic, a heart murmur was detected in one of the other children, had had heart surgery and the issue is resolved. The caregiver

**Bellefontaine**

212 E. Columbus Ave., Suite 1  
Bellefontaine, OH 43311

**Indian Lake**

8200 St. Rt. 366, Suite 1  
Russells Point, OH 43348

**West Liberty**

4879 US Rt. 68 South  
West Liberty, OH 43357

**Urbana**

605 Miami St., Suite 100  
Urbana, OH 43078

**School-Based Health Centers**

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also was seen in the SBHC and was referred to a specialist, and an autoimmune disease was identified.

Finally, the father in the home was seen and referred to a neurologist to get new treatment that helps the quality of his life. In the words of the caregiver, "This school-based health center changed my family's lives."

The bottom line is this: CHWP's growth in serving individuals in a community dominated by farming and manufacturing industries, such as the Honda of America territory, is a testament to our commitment to providing healthcare that is affordable, efficient, and quality-driven. Through the growth of our 340B Contract Pharmacies we have been able to support our chronic disease patients, behavioral health patients, open school-based health centers, develop substance use programs and offer transportation services.

The impact for Community Health & Wellness means cutting a quarter of their budget, forcing a reduction in services, staff layoffs, or, in some cases, closing our doors entirely. CHWP would be reducing their SBHCs by 100% and certainly would not be able to expand further services or programming. We would be unable to support transportation for our patients to get to and from appointments, and most importantly, unable to support other areas of their care with medical supplies or simple things like shoes.

Community Health & Wellness Partners use the savings to fund critical services, services essential to maintaining the overall health of our communities and reducing long-term healthcare costs by preventing more severe health issues down the line.

In conclusion, I urge you to consider the far-reaching consequences of these proposed revisions to the 340B program, in carving out contract pharmacies for community health centers. Let's work together to not cut off an appendage that supports a health care model that has been proven to work. Health centers in Ohio are committed to reinvesting back into their health centers to make their delivery and access to health care efficient, effective, and economical.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am hopeful that with your leadership, we can protect and strengthen the 340B program for the benefit of all Ohioans.

Respectfully,

Tara D. Bair, President/CEO

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