

**Public Testimony of Dàna M. Langford, Co-Founder & CEO**  
**Village of Healing**  
**on HB 96 State Operating Budget**  
**Ohio House Health Committee**

Chair Schmidt, Vice Chair Deeter, Ranking Member Somani, and members of the House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding our funding request in House Bill 96, in the FY26-27 State Operating Budget.

My name is Dàna M. Langford, and I currently serve as the Co-Founder and CEO of Village of Healing is a community development organization focused on healing and empowering individuals to improve health.

I appreciate the opportunity to share how our organization is transforming maternal and infant health outcomes in Ohio and why we are requesting \$800,000 in funding to expand our critical services.

At Village of Healing, we are redefining healthcare for moms and babies. Our patient-centered, interdisciplinary model integrates women's health, primary care, mental health, and community resources to ensure that mothers and their children not only survive but thrive. Unlike traditional healthcare models, we prioritize a holistic and proactive approach—one that recognizes and addresses risks before they become crises.

Village of Healing is the only healthcare model of its kind in Northeast Ohio. Our collaborative structure brings together healthcare providers, including family nurse practitioners, mental health specialists, and community health workers, to work closely as a team. This includes regular case meetings, in-person consultations, and telehealth communication, ensuring continuity of care. This model places mothers and their babies at the center of care, improving follow-up rates, treatment compliance, and overall health outcomes.

Since opening our doors in 2022, we have served over 1,800 patients, with our patient volume doubling each year. In the last fiscal year:

- 95% of the pregnant women we cared for reached full-term delivery (37+ weeks)—a crucial milestone that reduces complications such as NICU admissions, breathing difficulties, and feeding issues, ultimately benefiting workforce stability and economic productivity.
- Our family nurse practitioner has achieved a 98% control rate for diabetic patients, keeping their HbA1c below 7%. This dramatically lowers the risk of heart disease, kidney failure, amputations, and blindness—conditions that contribute to billions in healthcare costs nationwide. By preventing severe diabetes complications, we reduce hospitalizations, emergency room visits, and long-term disability.

The need for Village of Healing's services has never been more urgent. The Ohio Department of Health recently reported that 66% of pregnancy-related deaths in 2020 were preventable, with nearly half of deaths due to infection deemed avoidable. The leading contributors were inadequate risk assessment and lack of comprehensive postpartum care—exactly the gaps our model is designed to address.

Our postpartum and pediatric program is the only one of its kind in the state. By scheduling mothers and babies together for appointments throughout the baby's first year and the mother's full postpartum year, we proactively screen for cardiovascular disease and mental health risks—the top causes of maternal mortality in the first 12 months after birth. This approach saves lives while also reducing long-term healthcare costs for the state, insurers, and taxpayers.

We have been grateful for previous funding from the State of Ohio, including grants from the Governor's Office and the Ohio Department of Medicaid. These funds have allowed us to:

- Recruit and retain highly qualified healthcare professionals, despite competition from large hospital systems.
- Develop easy-to-understand educational materials on chronic disease management, maternal health, and mental wellness, empowering patients to take charge of their health.
- Address transportation barriers by providing travel vouchers, ensuring patients can attend critical appointments and reducing missed visits that often lead to costly hospitalizations.
- Invest in professional development to keep our providers at the forefront of best practices in maternal and infant care.
- Implement Apricot CRM, a comprehensive case management system that enhances care coordination, tracks patient outcomes, and strengthens reporting for funding accountability.

While we have successfully sustained our operations through a combination of grants, patient reimbursements, and private donations, our rapidly growing patient base requires additional state support to keep up with demand. Since 2022, the number of visits we provide has tripled annually. To meet this need, we must:

- Expand our clinical team to accommodate increasing patient volume.
- Continue to offer competitive salaries to attract and retain top-tier healthcare professionals.
- Purchase essential medical and IT equipment, including exam tables, lifesaving devices, computers, and printers to support efficient patient care and data management.

- Strengthen outreach efforts, particularly in Youngstown, where we are expanding services to address maternal health disparities in a new community.

Village of Healing has demonstrated a strong commitment to sustainability and partnership. We have secured funding from esteemed organizations such as the Cleveland Foundation, Gund Foundation, Glick Family Foundation, and Saint Luke's Foundation. Nationally, we have been supported by Goldman Sachs and the Maternal Mental Health Equity Fund. These investments underscore the confidence that public and private partners have in our ability to drive meaningful change.

However, state support is crucial to scaling our impact. With your investment of \$800,000, we will be able to expand access to lifesaving care, enhance economic stability for families, and reduce long-term healthcare costs across Ohio.

In conclusion, Village of Healing has built a proven, effective model that is saving lives and improving health outcomes for Ohio's mothers and babies. We deeply appreciate the support we have received and look forward to strengthening our partnership with the State of Ohio. This funding will allow us to continue our mission and ensure that every mother and baby in our state has the opportunity not just to survive—but to thrive.

Thank you for your time, I am happy to answer any questions the committee may have.