



## **Advocates for Ohio's Future**

Testimony to the Ohio House of Representatives  
Medicaid Committee  
HB 96, Main Operating Budget FY2026-FY2027  
March 4, 2025

Chair Gross, Vice Chair Barhorst, Ranking Member Baker, and members of the House Medicaid Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the as-introduced state budget. My name is Sarah Hudacek and I am the Coalition Manager of Advocates for Ohio's Future. Advocates for Ohio's Future (AOF) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan coalition of state and local health and human services policy, advocacy and provider organizations that strive to strengthen families and communities through health, human services, and early care & education.

AOF is a broad-based coalition of organizations that focus on behavioral health, children and families, disability services, aging, food and nutrition, housing, education, and more, and it cannot be overstated the extent to which any changes to the Medicaid program would ripple throughout the health and human services spectrum.

More than 3 million Ohioans are served by Medicaid, including more than 770,000 who are enrolled through Medicaid expansion.<sup>1</sup> These 770,000 Ohioans would be cut off from all Medicaid services if the provision included in the as-introduced budget to end Group VIII coverage in Ohio if the federal government lowers its Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) for that group were to be triggered.<sup>2</sup> This provision would have an immediate effect on Ohioans earning up to 138 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), which for a family of four in 2025 is just \$44,367 per year.

Ohioans cut out of Medicaid by this trigger would face a difficult landscape of alternatives to coverage. Employees earning less than 200 percent FPL are less likely to work for an employer who offers insurance, and less likely to be eligible for that insurance, than higher income workers.<sup>3</sup>

Those who are eligible for employer coverage may face high out-of-pocket costs. In 2023, the average annual premium for employer-sponsored coverage for families in Ohio was \$23,895, and the average deductible was \$3,886.<sup>4</sup> For Ohioans who are not able to afford employer-sponsored coverage, the Healthcare.gov Marketplace offers premium tax credits to assist with the monthly cost of insurance, but

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<sup>1</sup> Ohio Department of Medicaid Demographic and Expenditure Dashboard

<sup>2</sup> Section 126.70

<sup>3</sup> Peterson-KFF Health System Tracker: <https://www.healthsystemtracker.org/chart-collection/trends-in-employer-based-health-coverage/>

<sup>4</sup> KFF: <https://www.kff.org/statedata/election-state-fact-sheets/ohio/>

only to those above 100 percent FPL.<sup>5</sup> This would leave a critical gap for Ohioans losing access to Medicaid expansion, who are unable to afford employer-sponsored insurance, and who are ineligible for Marketplace premiums - all because they are below the poverty level.

Medicaid expansion is a shared state and federal expense, with the federal government covering 90 percent of the costs of services and the state covering just 10 percent. The trigger provision would eliminate expansion coverage if the FMAP drops by even 1 percent.

AOF asks this committee to evaluate the impact of this trigger on the state and across systems, and to consider ways to mitigate the harm it would cause, including where the threshold can be set to support Medicaid access for Ohioans while maintaining a balanced budget, and whether off-ramps can be included in the provision. Thank you for your time and your diligence throughout this budget process. I welcome questions in-person and via email at [shudacek@communitysolutions.com](mailto:shudacek@communitysolutions.com).

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<sup>5</sup> KFF: <https://www.kff.org/affordable-care-act/issue-brief/explaining-health-care-reform-questions-about-health-insurance-subsidies/>