

Chair Gross, Vice Chair Barhorst, Ranking Member Baker, and members of the House Medicaid Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my written testimony regarding items in Ohio's operating budget. My name is Jessica Williams, and I am a clinical psychologist in the state of Ohio. As a mental health provider who works with many Ohioans who have benefited significantly from Medicaid expansion, I have concerns about two items in Ohio's state operating budget. I am asking that you remove the Medicaid Trigger Language (Section 126.70) and Federal Mirror Language (Section 126.10) from Ohio's operating budget.

Over the course of my career, I have observed how Medicaid expansion has allowed for significant increased access to medical and behavioral health services for Ohioans. It has been a profound relief as a provider to know there is more support in place to help Ohioans access Medicaid coverage and to know this coverage is more widely accepted with this expansion, allowing for greater coordination of care and access to services. I have been able to provide mental health care to people in the state of Ohio that likely could not have accessed care prior to Medicaid expansion, seeing parents work to stabilize their mental health to allow them to be present for their families more, watching younger people intervene on significant mental health concerns at younger ages in ways that could yield better long-term outcomes for them in the future, and watching individuals care more for their physical health now that barriers of insurance coverage have been reduced. It is a relief as a provider to know so many of my patients have more insurance coverage options through Medicaid expansion that have allowed them to access various levels of mental health care as well as access necessary mental health medication services and medical services. Many of the individuals with whom I have worked that have benefited from Medicaid expansion work at jobs that do not provide insurance coverage or work part time to allow them to provide childcare for their family or better manage their physical and mental health needs. Medicaid expansion has allowed so many Americans, and thousands of Ohioans, to have a better quality of life and participate more actively in their community, whether it is through labor, supporting their families, or volunteering to help others in need.

Please consider removing Sections 126.70 and 126.10 from Ohio's operating budget, demonstrating that while the federal government may shift in their support of everyday Americans, Ohio will continue to support the thousands of Ohioans who depend on and are absolutely worth supporting through Medicaid expansion.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to provide written testimony,

Dr. Jessica Williams