



March 6, 2025

Chairperson: Rep. Gross

Members of the Committee

Introduction:

Good afternoon, Chairperson Gross, and esteemed members of the Ohio House Medicaid Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to address you today regarding the proposed cuts to the 340B Drug Pricing Program, a program that has been instrumental in providing affordable healthcare to vulnerable populations across our wonderful State. My name is Tara Bair, and I am here representing Ohio's FQHCs and, particularly, Community Health & Wellness Partners, which serves to advocate for the health and well-being of 13,000 individuals in rural Champaign and Logan Counties.

Background:

Community Health & Wellness Partners celebrated its 10-year anniversary in 2024. 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 support our primary care patients by surrounding them with integrated care, which is composed of behavioral health, pharmacy, chronic care management, nutrition, and social services to support the whole person and whole community.

Main Testimony:

Growth and Impact:

Our 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.

Importance of the 340B Program:

Established in 1992, the 340B program has been a cornerstone in ensuring that healthcare facilities serving low-income and uninsured patients can acquire medications at reduced prices. This program allows community health centers in Ohio to stretch limited resources, thereby increasing access to comprehensive healthcare services, including prescription medications, for those who need it most.

Threat of Proposed Cuts:

The proposed carve-outs to Ohio's 340B program threaten to dismantle this vital safety net. For many of our community health centers that are already experiencing the Health Professional Shortage in Primary Care, these cuts would result in significant financial strain, forcing them to reduce services, lay off staff, or, in some cases, close their doors entirely. This threat extends to School-Based Health Centers, which have been instrumental in improving educational outcomes such as school performance, grade

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
West Liberty-Salem Benjamin Logan Indian Lake Riverside

Phone: 937-599-1411 • Fax: 937-599-4128 • CHWPcares.org



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promotion, and high school completion. The devastating loss of both health center clinics and school-based health centers would not only significantly impact the patients who rely on them for essential healthcare services but also jeopardize the future success of our students.

Impact on Ohio:

In Ohio, the impact of these cuts would be profound. Our state has a significant number of rural and underserved urban areas where access to affordable healthcare is already a challenge for its residents. Rural residents should be able to conveniently and confidently access healthcare, which is their right. The 340B program has been crucial in bridging the gap between healthcare access and affordability. By cutting this program, we risk increasing health disparities, particularly among our most vulnerable populations, including children, the elderly, and those with chronic health conditions.

Beyond Medication Access:

The financial benefits realized through the 340B program extend beyond just medication access. The funds Community Health & Wellness Partners received last year from the 340B program accounted for a quarter of their revenue. Like many other participating organizations, CHWP uses this revenue to invest in patients and the surrounding communities. 340B revenue also funds critical and potentially life-saving services such as mental health care, substance use treatment, and preventive care programs. These services are essential for maintaining the overall health of our communities, fostering safety, and reducing long-term healthcare costs by preventing more severe health issues down the line.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, I urge you to consider the far-reaching consequences of these proposed cuts. Let us work together to find solutions that preserve the integrity and intent of the 340B program. By doing so, we can continue to support our healthcare providers in delivering high-quality, affordable care to those who need it most.

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

Bellefontaine

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