

March 5, 2025

Chair Gross and Members of House Medicaid Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on behalf of the Ohio Nurses Association, representing thousands of frontline nurses and health professionals across the state. Our healthcare workforce is already stretched to the breaking point. We are battling severe staffing shortages, rising levels of workplace violence, and an influx of patients coming in sicker than ever before. Medicaid cuts will only add to this crisis—forcing hospitals to close, worsening staffing challenges, and making it even harder for patients to get the care they need.

Patients in Ohio are facing a serious crisis, and ONA needs you to stand up for Ohioans. The proposed Medicaid cuts threaten the health and well-being of millions, including new moms, children with special needs, veterans, workers with low wages, and retirees.

A Healthcare Crisis in the Making

Congress is likely to make significant changes to Medicaid nationally, a program that supports about 2.9 million people in Ohio. That is nearly one in four Ohioans. These proposed cuts are not about improving efficiency or fixing the system—they are about cutting people off their healthcare or forcing states to shoulder more of the burden, all to fund corporate tax breaks. If this happens, Ohio will be forced to cut funding for K-12 education, law enforcement, and other critical public services just to keep hospitals running.

Medicaid provides 19% of all hospital payments in our state. It is a critical lifeline keeping rural hospitals open and ensuring that patients can access care before an emergency. If these funds disappear, hospitals—especially in rural and underserved areas—will close, forcing people to travel hours for basic care or, worse, go without it altogether.

The Real Cost of Medicaid Cuts

As nurses, we see firsthand the consequences when people delay seeking care because they can't afford it. One patient I cared for is a tragic example. A hardworking man who initially ignored early signs of infection, including fever and increasing pain, because he didn't have insurance and couldn't afford to see a doctor. He had a tooth abscess, a seemingly simple issue that many might overlook. But that small infection went untreated, leading to severe, overwhelming sepsis.

By the time he finally came to the emergency room, it was too late. Despite our best efforts, the sepsis took over, and over the next month, his condition deteriorated rapidly. He passed away, leaving his family without a

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father, husband, and son. His wife lost her partner, his children lost their father, and his parents lost their son—tragedy that could have been avoided if he had access to the care he needed sooner.

This man's death didn't have to happen. It was preventable. If he had access to Medicaid and affordable care, he could have received early treatment for the infection before it spiraled out of control. His life, and the lives of his family, could have been spared.

If Medicaid is gutted, more patients will suffer the same fate. More people will delay care, thinking they can't afford it or don't qualify for assistance, only to find themselves facing a much worse situation when it's too late. More families will lose loved ones, needlessly torn apart by preventable illness and death.

A Call to Protect Ohio's Most Vulnerable

Medicaid is one of the most efficient healthcare programs we have. The vast majority of people who rely on it are already working or in school, doing everything they can to support their families. Cutting this program doesn't save lives—it ends them.

We urge you to stand with Ohioans, not against them. Protect Medicaid. Protect our hospitals. Protect our patients. The health of our state depends on it.

Thank you for your time and consideration. ONA is also sharing these concerns with our federal delegation and encouraging the federal government to maintain adequate support for Ohio patients. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or need further information

Respectfully submitted,

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Health Professionals

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