

Chair Gross, Vice Chair Barhorst, Ranking Member Somani, and members of the House Medicaid Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding House Bill 96, the FY26-27 State Operating Budget. I know it has been a long day for you all so I will keep my remarks brief.

My name is Dele Ogunleye, and I am a Board certified Ob/Gyn licensed in the state of Ohio and the medical director for Ohio Birth Center.

The Ohio birth Center is a Freestanding birth Center that was opened to help improve the outcomes of healthcare among pregnant women in Columbus and its surrounding areas.

Our mission in Ohio birth Center is to provide high quality outcome at a lower cost to payers, especially Medicaid. We provide Midwife-led holistic care only to Low risk patients during prenatal and in labor and postpartum periods. We also provide prenatal classes as well for patients emphasizing doula care, lactation and enhanced prenatal care which has all been shown to significantly improve outcomes. Our goal is to accept all patients regardless of insurance type.

Currently we have a very unsatisfactory outcomes for pregnant women in Ohio

March of dimes rates Ohio D + with higher than national average rates for Preterm birth and Infant mortality rates. Unfortunately, those rates are higher amongst low-income patients most especially in Medicaid population.

I would like to draw your attention to the materials in front of you.

One of the landmark studies - Strong Start study by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation

Comparing outcomes between birth center patients and conventional patients and it showed significantly improved outcomes among Medicaid patients that went to a birth center at 21% reduced cost. It also showed that much lower rates of Cesarean sections rates, lower preterm birth rates compared to hospital patients

The American college of Obstetrics and Gynecology designates Well accredited Birth centers should be the first level of care for Low-risk patients.

As more hospital labor and deliveries close nationwide the need for safe alternatives become more acute and a lot of patients drive for close to 90 mins to Ohio birth center and we expect this to continue. It is without doubt that birth centers are proven to not only improve outcomes for maternal and infant care but also reduce cost as have been shown in many neighboring states like Indiana, North Carolina and Illinois and Michigan where birth centers are accessible for women.

However, there are so many challenges that Birth centers face in Ohio with regards to opening. This unfortunately leads to restrictions in access to care for many pregnant patients and diminishes choice of care for patients who are then forced to choose between hospital deliveries and home births.

Once again thanks for affording me the opportunity to testify in front of you today. I will be happy to answer any questions.

