

Maria A. Matzik
House Medicaid
Interested Party Testimony

March 5, 2025

Chairperson Gross, Vice Chair Barhorst, Ranking Member Baker, and members of the House Medicaid Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide interested party testimony on the proposed 26-27 Medicaid Budget.

My name is Maria Matzik, and I am a Proud Disabled Woman, Disability Rights Advocate and Consumer on the Ohio Home Care Program. I have Spinal Muscular Atrophy Type II. I use the assistance of a ventilator for breathing, and I have a tracheostomy. I use a reclining motorized wheelchair for mobility. In addition, I have a job, a wonderful partner, beautiful cats, great friends, own an accessible home, own a wheelchair accessible vehicle, vote, **and pay taxes**.

I am testifying today to advocate for the protection of Medicaid, which plays a critical role in ensuring that people with disabilities, like myself, can live independently, pursue meaningful work, and fully participate in our community.

For those of us with disabilities, Medicaid is not just a healthcare program; it is the key to our autonomy. It is the foundation that allows us to make our own decisions, control our lives, and contribute to society in ways that reflect our true potential. Without Medicaid, the barriers to independence become insurmountable. We would be unable to access the necessary medical care, personal assistance, therapies, or equipment that allow us to live and work in our own homes, on our own terms.

For me, Medicaid means I can get the personal care I need to live a full life. It gives me access to the services that support my health and independence, such as nursing care and home healthcare services, which are essential for me to continue working, managing my health, and fully participating in life. But, without these services, I would face impossible choices that diminish my quality of life.

The work of home care providers has been essential for years, but especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. These providers are unsung heroes, yet they are not recognized as first responders or essential workers. Their work is vital to people with disabilities like me, yet they are often denied healthcare benefits, paid leave, and fair wages. Many of these providers rely on Medicaid themselves because their pay is so low.

I urge you to stand with Ohioans with disabilities in the face of potential Medicaid cuts that threaten our independence, our ability to work, and our future. Protect Medicaid, keep these essential services intact, and invest in the future of Ohio's disability

community. We are not asking for charity—we are demanding the right to live as equals, to contribute to society, and to pursue the same opportunities as everyone else.

People with disabilities are resilient individuals with a passion for life and a drive to succeed. Most non-disabled individuals will never, and could never, endure the oppression, segregation, discrimination, humiliation, ignorance and pain that individuals with disabilities face throughout their entire lives. We are constantly having to prove our worth and value to a society that only values wealth, beauty and success. It is time to fight like our life is in danger, because it is!

Thank you for your time, and for your commitment to ensuring Ohio is a place where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Respectfully Submitted,

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