

Testimony of Brent Johnson, MSW, LISW-S
In Opposition to SB96 – Proposed Medicaid Expansion Reversal Language
Ohio Senate Finance Committee
May 28, 2025

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Finance Committee:

My name is Brent Johnson, and I am a Licensed Independent Social Worker with Supervisor designation (LISW-S) residing and practicing in Northwest Ohio. I supervise Behavioral Health Social Work within a hospital system that serves patients across emergency, psychiatric inpatient, and medical-surgical settings. I am writing to express my strong opposition to the inclusion of language in SB96 that would terminate Medicaid expansion in Ohio should the federal government alter its funding share.

In my clinical role, I have firsthand experience witnessing the positive impact Medicaid expansion has had in providing access to care for many of my patients. Specifically, it has enabled individuals to receive psychopharmacotherapy, individual, group, and family counseling, substance use treatment, crisis intervention, and essential medical services—services that would otherwise be inaccessible to them.

Should Medicaid expansion be rolled back, our capacity to deliver timely and effective care would be severely compromised. Emergency departments would experience surges in psychiatric and medical crises that could have been prevented. Patients would deteriorate without access to outpatient care, medications, or follow-up, leading to destabilization not just medically, but emotionally and lead to financial ruin for entire families.

Our local healthcare system, like many others, already operates under considerable financial strain. The removal of Medicaid expansion would result in a significant loss of revenue and patient access, with ripple effects extending well beyond the uninsured population. It is already challenging for individuals who earn too much to qualify for expanded Medicaid but not enough to afford their medical bills, leading to substantial revenue losses. Healthcare systems must continue to serve all individuals, regardless of their ability to pay, in alignment with our professional ethics and federal laws such as EMTALA. Even privately insured individuals would be impacted by system-wide slowdowns, staffing losses, and increased emergency use.

This proposal is not fiscally responsible; it is, quite frankly, dangerous. It jeopardizes the lives and dignity of our most vulnerable citizens while also threatening the jobs and livelihoods of the over 3,200 associates within our healthcare system. The potential inability to financially sustain hospital operations could dramatically impact the healthcare of even those in our community with commercial insurance and the ability to pay. Notably, Findlay, Ohio, is home to major employers such as Marathon Petroleum Headquarters and Cooper Tire, and any disruption to our healthcare infrastructure could have far-reaching consequences for the broader community including them.

I urge you to reject this language in SB96 and protect the health and well-being of our communities.

Thank you for your time and public service.

Sincerely,
Brent Johnson, MSW, LISW-S