

## Written Testimony Before the Ohio Senate Finance Committee

### June 5, 2025

Chairman, Vice Chair, Ranking Member, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony seeking support to create Health Workforce Ohio, a public-private partnership to achieve comprehensive health workforce improvements across the state.

#### Background and Need

Ohioans across our state—particularly in urban, rural, and Appalachian medically underserved areas—face significant barriers in accessing timely, quality healthcare. Two primary factors drive this challenge:

1. A persistent and acute shortage of certified and licensed health professionals.
2. Stark geographic disparities in access to care.

Currently, there are over 70,000 active job postings in healthcare in Ohio. The healthcare sector contributes \$171.5 billion to the state's economy and supports over 1.19 million jobs, yet, our workforce pipeline struggles to meet growing demand.

#### Proposed Solution: Health Workforce Ohio

To address these pressing challenges, we propose the establishment of **Health Workforce Ohio**—a collaborative hub for statewide health workforce innovation. This initiative will:

- Increase the size, and preparedness of the in-demand health workforce.
- Improve access to quality care in underserved communities.
- Increase retention of healthcare professionals trained in Ohio.

Health Workforce Ohio would work to address the healthcare workforce shortage by connecting job seekers with living-wage healthcare positions. Their approach focuses on three key actions: convening stakeholders, assessing workforce needs, and investing in strategies that create clear career pathways. The initiative aims to bridge the gap between available jobs and potential candidates, particularly in underserved communities. Health Workforce Ohio is helping individuals access training and partnering with employers on job placement opportunities.

## **Key Strategies and Measures of Success**

Health Workforce Ohio will implement targeted strategies, including:

- Developing standardized career pathways of Ohio's most in-demand health professions.
- Expanding and enhancing healthcare education programs.
- Supporting telemedicine training and deployment in underserved areas.
- Surveying healthcare students to understand and improve post-graduation retention.
- Launching pilot programs that address top retention drivers.

Success will be measured through:

- Increased student enrollment in healthcare programs.
- Improved hiring and retention rates.
- Reduced vacancy rates.
- Enhanced telemedicine capability in underserved regions.
- Higher rates of graduates remaining to practice in Ohio.

## **Funding and Sustainability**

State funding to launch Health Workforce Ohio will support:

- Strategic workforce development
- Promotion of Career Pathways
- Research and data management
- Education and training alignment
- Scaling best practices and innovation

To ensure long-term impact and continued engagement, Health Workforce Ohio will pursue federal and state grants, private sector investment, and philanthropic support. Additionally, we will explore fee-based services to sustain operations.

## **Conclusion**

Health Workforce Ohio represents a strategic, collaborative solution to one of the most critical health infrastructure challenges facing our state. By investing in the people who power our health system, we can expand access, improve outcomes, and strengthen the economic foundation of communities across Ohio.

## Broad-Based Support

This proposal is backed by a collaborative network of more than 30 organizations across the healthcare and education sectors, including:

Appalachian Children Coalition	Ohio Association of Community Health Centers
Aspyr	Ohio Association of Health Plans
Association of Ohio Health Commissioners	Ohio Health Care Association
Central Ohio Hospital Council	Ohio Hospital Association
Central School of Practical Nursing	Ohio Rural Health Association
ConxusNEO	Ohio University Area Health Education Center
Corporation for Ohio Appalachian Development	Raise the Bar Hancock County
Cuyahoga Community College	Strategic Ohio Council for Higher Education
Geauga Growth Partnership	The Center for Health Affairs
Genesis Healthcare System	The Ohio Alliance for Population Health
Greater Dayton Area Hospital Association	The Ohio Council of Behavioral Health & Family Services Providers
Health Impact	The Health Collaborative
Ohio Hopewell Health Centers	Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce
Hospital Council of Northwest Ohio	Ursuline College
New Bridge Cleveland	
Ohio Association of Community Colleges	

We thank you for your time and consideration and look forward to engaging with you to support health workforce recruitment and retention to support the health of Ohioans and economic vitality for the state.

Respectfully submitted,  
Deirdre Beluan  
The Health Collaborative  
(513) 673-9865 | [dbeluan@healthcollab.org](mailto:dbeluan@healthcollab.org)

Rick Hodges  
The Ohio Alliance for Population Health  
(614) 793-5645 | [hodgesr@ohio.edu](mailto:hodgesr@ohio.edu)