



June 6, 2025

**Ohio Senate Finance Committee  
Interested Party Testimony on Sub. HB 96**

Chairman Cirino, Vice Chairman Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson and members of the Senate Finance committee, thank you for your time today to share our perspective on the Senate's proposed state budget, substitute HB 96. My name is Tara Britton and I'm the Director of Public Policy at The Center for Community Solutions, an independent, nonpartisan policy and research center dedicated to delivering practical, data-driven solutions focused on improving health, social and economic conditions for Ohioans.

We recognize the enormous task you all have embarked on, ensuring that public dollars are meeting the needs of Ohioans within the confines of a balanced budget. Our testimony focuses on the key changes we are requesting that build upon the goals of a more effective, efficient and responsive budget document that addresses pressing needs of Ohioans.

**Medicaid trigger language**

As members of the Ohio Medicaid Matters (OMM) coalition we join our partners in asking for a change to the so-called "trigger" language which would mean an immediate end to the Medicaid expansion in Ohio if the federal government adjusted its share of the costs. While the **preference is a change in the language from the Medicaid expansion "shall" end to the expansion "may" end**, to ensure that individuals have as a seamless a transition as possible, **we're urging Ohio lawmakers to consider an amendment to ensure an orderly transition process if the trigger is enacted.**

OMM is asking the Ohio Senate for a formalized process to set expectations and timelines that give Ohioans time and resources to find alternative ways to access care, including life-saving medications. The coalition respectfully requests that the Senate:

- Remove the word "immediately" from the trigger clause to prevent abrupt discontinuation of medical assistance, which could leave individuals without necessary care.
- Revise the language to stipulate that Group VIII eligibility will be terminated if the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) changes after the Ohio Department of Medicaid Director has submitted the necessary state plan amendment and received federal approval to end coverage OR after 120 days, whichever is shorter. This approach allows for a measured response to funding changes.
- Require the Ohio Department of Medicaid Director to submit a comprehensive transition plan within 30 days. This plan should include:
  - o Notification procedures for impacted recipients and providers.
  - o Information on alternative insurance coverage options and assistance programs.
  - o Defined roles for Managed Care Organizations (MCOs), county departments of Job and Family Services, ombuds programs and other stakeholders in supporting

individuals through the transition, including assistance with continuing care and applications for disability or other Medicaid coverage options.

### **Continuous Medicaid coverage for young children**

In 2023, the Ohio General Assembly made a commitment to the youngest Ohioans by enacting House Bill 33. House Bill 33 (ORC Section 5155.45) required the Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM) to submit a Section 1115 waiver demonstration to provide continuous Medicaid coverage for children aged zero until their fourth birthday. The current version of HB 96 removes the continuous coverage provision. Continuous coverage for young children would strengthen support for families by eliminating the risk of losing coverage during a child's first four years. This is an especially important period that can have a lifelong impact for many children. **We ask that continuous coverage for young kids be restored in the Senate budget.**

### **Lead poisoning prevention**

The Senate retained the House changes to lead poisoning prevention and remediation that would move Ohio backward in its efforts to end lead poisoning of children. The Senate maintained the House's changes that substantially reduced the lead abatement funding and the elimination of funding for the lead-safe home fund, hollowing out lead prevention and remediation efforts supported by state dollars. Children across the state could risk continuous exposure in their homes without proper mitigation. **Community Solutions supports the work of the Lead-Free Kids Coalition and the Coalition's asks to restore this funding to the Governor's introduced budget.**

### **Infant/children's health**

The Senate's version of the budget even further reduces funding for Infant Vitality funding. Cuts to funding would limit the services that community- and faith-based providers can offer to families. Funding for Help Me Grow was also further reduced in the Senate budget. Ohio needs a continued strong response to address infant mortality and to invest in children early in life to make the most impact. **We ask that the Senate restore funding for Infant Vitality and Help Me Grow to the levels proposed in the Governor's budget.**

### **Harm reduction**

The only dedicated funding for harm reduction in the state budget was eliminated in the Senate budget. These dollars are used by local communities to address overdoses and promote substance use prevention. **We ask that funding levels be restored to the Governor's proposed level (\$500,000 over the biennium).**

### **Property taxes**

We recognize that there is public demand to address the challenges that have come with rising property taxes across the state and appreciate that the legislature is trying to be responsive. At the same time, there is an expectation that efficient, effective and responsive public services be provided by all levels of government. Introducing significant changes to the structure and scope of local property taxes in the state budget does not allow for the level of research, debate and compromise that will be required to address these issues. Local property taxes in Ohio support vital health and human services for the residents of this state, across the lifespan, and we would encourage a thorough and thoughtful debate on these issues outside of the time-constrained state budget process.

**Conclusion**

Community Solutions' mission is to improve health, social and economic conditions, which span several issues and thus, several state agencies, so we appreciate the committee's attention today to an array of health and human services priorities. Our team would be happy to answer any questions via [tbritton@communitysolutions.com](mailto:tbritton@communitysolutions.com). Thank you!