



Advocates for Ohio's Future

Testimony to the Ohio Senate

Medicaid Committee

SCR5: Urge Presidential support for Medicaid work requirements

March 11, 2025

Chair Romanchuk, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the Senate Medicaid Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written opponent testimony on SCR 5. My name is Sarah Hudacek and I am the Coalition Manager of Advocates for Ohio's Future. Advocates for Ohio's Future (AOF) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan coalition of state and local health and human services policy, advocacy and provider organizations that strive to strengthen families and communities through health, human services, and early care & education.

In January, AOF joined 664 other stakeholders in submitting comments to the Ohio Department of Medicaid in response to the proposed Group VIII 1115 Waiver Application to add a new pre-enrollment requirement for Medicaid expansion members to be employed or enrolled in school or an occupational training program prior to accessing the Medicaid program. AOF's comments, like 90% of the submitted comments, were opposed to the proposal. The submitted work requirements waiver is not aligned with the purpose of the Medicaid program, which is to provide health care coverage to low-income families and individuals.

Good health is a critical prerequisite for maintaining a job, earning an education, and participating in communities, which are in turn critical for building economic stability. The proposed waiver would reduce access to health care for low-income Ohioans eligible for Medicaid and would reduce positive health outcomes, lead to increased medical debt, and increase the cost of administering the Medicaid program.

Moreover, data shows that the Medicaid enrollees who are able to work are already working. According to the 2023 Ohio Medicaid Assessment Survey, 45.7% of the total Medicaid population ages 19-64 are working.ⁱ Of those enrolled in Medicaid between 19-64 who are not working, 56.3% are not working because of a physical or mental health condition, 34.2% are not working because they are a caretaker for a family member, 22% are not working because of a lack of childcare, and 20.9% are not working because of a lack of transportation, to name only a few barriers to work faced by Medicaid enrollees.

In the application, the Ohio Department of Medicaid estimates that "no more than 61,826 individuals will be considered not exempt and not currently working." However, a review of Census Bureau data by The Center for Community Solutions finds that 448,173 Ohioans would be at risk of losing Medicaid coverage under the new requirements.¹

¹ Campbell, E. (2025, January 13). *Ohio's proposed Medicaid work requirement could cost thousands of Ohioans their healthcare coverage*. The Center for Community Solutions. <https://www.communitysolutions.com/resources/ohio-medicaid-work-requirement-lose-healthcare-coverage>

Ohio can learn from the experiences of Georgia and Arkansas, where Medicaid work requirements have led to thousands of Medicaid enrollees losing access to coverage, deferring medical care because of cost, and falling into medical debt - all while the programs showed no evidence of increased work, training, or education engagement amongst Medicaid members.^{2 3}

The proposed waiver asserts that engagement in work, education, and training programs will lead to improved health outcomes for Medicaid enrollees. In actuality, the reverse is true. Improved health outcomes will likely lead to deeper community engagement, including through work, education, and training.⁴

AOF respectfully asks the committee to oppose SCR5 and to instead urge federal investment in programs that support Ohioans on the path to economic stability, rather than in punitive, burdensome requirements that will cause harm and restrict access to Medicaid coverage for low-income Ohioans. Thank you for your time and the opportunity to share comments. I welcome questions at any time at shudacek@communitysolutions.com.

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² Sommers, B. D., Chen, L., Blendon, R. J., Orav, E. J., & Epstein, A. M. (2020a). Medicaid work requirements in Arkansas: Two-year impacts on coverage, employment, and affordability of care. *Health Affairs*, 39(9), 1522-1530. <https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2020.00538>

³ Harker, L. (2024, December 19). *Georgia's Medicaid Experiment Is the Latest to Show Work Requirements Restrict Health Care Access*. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. <https://www.cbpp.org/blog/georgias-medicaid-experiment-is-the-latest-to-show-work-requirements-restrict-health-care>

⁴ Larisa Antonisse and Rachel Garfield, "The Relationship Between Work and Health: Findings from a Literature Review," KFF, August 2018, accessed at <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/the-relationship-between-work-and-health-findings-from-a-literature-review/>