



**Senate Medicaid Committee**  
**Substitute House Bill 96**  
**Angela Newman-White, Executive Director**  
**First Year Cleveland**  
**May 15, 2025**

Chair Romanchuk, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the Senate Medicaid Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Substitute House Bill 96. My name is Angela Newman-White, and I serve as the Executive Director of First Year Cleveland. Our organization works through partnerships and a unified strategy to reduce infant deaths. Our mission is rooted in the belief that every child in Ohio deserves a chance to celebrate their first birthday, and that every parent should have the tools and support to reach that milestone.

First Year Cleveland is proud to be a member of Ohio Medicaid Matters, a coalition of more than 80 organizations, including the state's leading human services agencies, health advocacy associations and hospital systems. We believe Medicaid is foundational to Ohio's economic success, and we want as many Ohioans as possible to have the health care they need to work and thrive.

We are particularly concerned about language in the current version of Sub. HB 96 that would immediately discontinue medical assistance for the 770,000 Ohioans covered under Medicaid expansion if federal funding dips below 90%. Such a hard trigger could leave vulnerable individuals without care. We respectfully ask the Committee to consider a simple but important revision: change the word "shall" to "may." This change gives Ohio the flexibility to make the right decision at the right time, based on fiscal and public health realities, and not a rigid federal threshold.

We also encourage the Senate to restore a key provision requiring the Ohio Department of Medicaid to seek federal approval for continuous Medicaid enrolment for children from birth to age three. This commonsense measure reduces paperwork, ensures care continuity, and gives families peace of mind during the most formative years of a child's life, all while cutting down on administrative costs. Additionally, we urge the Senate to reconsider the House's proposal to limit Medicaid doula services to just six counties. Access to doula care has been shown to improve maternal and infant outcomes and reduce costs through fewer complications and hospital interventions. Limiting this benefit to a handful of counties creates disparities and reduces the effectiveness of a tool that can make a real difference.

Thank you for your time and leadership. On behalf of the families we serve and the organizations we partner with, I urge you to uphold Ohio's commitment to life, health, and family by restoring and maintaining funding for these critical programs. I welcome any questions you may have.