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The MetroHealth System
HB 222 -Proponent Testimony
House Civil Justice Committee
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Chair Hillyer, Vice Chair Grendell, Ranking Member Galonski and members of the Committee - thank you for providing The MetroHealth System the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 222. The MetroHealth System is the safety-net health system for Cuyahoga County, caring for the most underserved members of our community. MetroHealth's more than 7,800 employees provide care at four hospitals, four emergency departments, more than 20 health centers and 40 additional sites throughout Northeast Ohio. In the past year, MetroHealth has served 300,000 patients at more than 1.4 million visits. Seventy-five percent of our patients are uninsured or covered by Medicare or Medicaid.

This bill seeks to provide clarity to an already codified section of the Ohio Revised Code.

In the last General Assembly, in the Operating Budget, House Bill 166, the Legislature included an amendment (SC2961x1) that helped ensure that our state's joint township district and county hospitals remain economically viable and can best meet the needs of the communities in which they provide healthcare services. This change provided the authority for the respective hospitals to partner with or create nonprofit entities to advance their mission. When the code sections that created County and Joint Township Districts Hospitals was originally drafted in the 1950's, the delivery of healthcare was far different than it is today. The revision to the statute provided a clear pathway for these hospitals the ability to form and partner with other entities, something that all other hospitals in the state could already do.

This language from HB 166 allows our hospitals to collaborate with existing nonprofit organizations to better achieve efficiencies and scale or provide new services where they don't exist today. For example, this law change allowed us to partner with community behavioral health and addiction service providers to meet the needs of our patients for these important services.

House Bill 222 further clarifies an unintended ambiguity in the current law, by stating that a nonprofit entity formed by a county or joint township district hospital are separate entities from the hospital. This legislation does not provide any new authority to these hospitals, but clarifies that any nonprofit formed or collaborating with a county or joint district hospital is a distinct

entity for all purposes and not a division, agency or department of the hospital. This change will provide potential partners to these nonprofit entities certainty that the relationship is with the nonprofit entity, and not the public county our joint township district hospital.

Public hospitals play a vital role in the overall delivery of essential healthcare services in our State.

Chair Hillyer, Vice Chair Grendell and Ranking Member Galonski and members of the Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to stand before you today and I will answer your questions and provide additional commentary, if necessary. Thank you.

About The MetroHealth System

The MetroHealth System is redefining health care by going beyond medical treatment to improve the foundations of community health and well-being: affordable housing, a cleaner environment, economic opportunity and access to fresh food, convenient transportation, legal help and other services. The system strives to become as good at preventing disease as it is at treating it.

The system's more than 600 doctors, 1,700 nurses and 7,800 employees go to work each day with a mission of service, to their patients and to the community. As Cuyahoga County's safety-net health system, MetroHealth plays an essential role in the region, caring for anyone and everyone, regardless of an ability to pay.

Founded in 1837, MetroHealth operates four hospitals, four emergency departments and more than 20 health centers and 40 additional sites throughout Cuyahoga County. The system serves more than 300,000 patients, two-thirds of whom are uninsured or covered by Medicare or Medicaid.

MetroHealth is home to Cuyahoga County's most experienced Level I Adult Trauma Center, verified since 1992, and Ohio's only adult and pediatric trauma and burn center.

As an academic medical center, MetroHealth is committed to research and to teaching and training tomorrow's caregivers. Each active staff physician holds a faculty appointment at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine. Its main campus hospital houses the Cleveland Metropolitan School District's Lincoln-West School of Science & Health, the only high school in America located inside a hospital.

Knowing that good health is about much more than good medical care, MetroHealth has launched the Institute for H.O.P.E.™ (Health, Opportunity, Partnership, Empowerment), which uses a coordinated, collaborative and strategic approach to help patients with non-medical needs such as healthy food, stable housing and job training.