

To: Ohio 134<sup>th</sup> General Assembly Members  
From: Cystic Fibrosis Task Force  
Date: March 2, 2021  
RE: Funding for the Children with Medical Handicaps (CMH) Program

Dear Colleagues,

We write to you today as members of the Cystic Fibrosis Legislative Task Force and advocates for the nearly 1,550 people in Ohio living with cystic fibrosis (CF) asking for your support of the “As Introduced” version of flat-funding for the Children with Medical Handicaps (CMH) Program in the upcoming biennial SFY 22-23 budget.

Cystic fibrosis is a life-threatening genetic disease that affects approximately 30,000 children and adults in the United States. CF causes the body to produce thick, sticky mucus that clogs the lungs and digestive system, which can lead to life-threatening infections. As a complex, multi-system condition, it requires targeted, specialized treatment and medications. Additionally, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), people with underlying health conditions, including respiratory conditions like CF, may be at greater risk of serious illness from COVID-19.<sup>[1]</sup>

CMH is a state program run by the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and acts as a safety net for children with special health care needs who meet medical and financial eligibility requirements. The program fills gaps in coverage related to the child’s special health condition and acts as a payer of last resort to help families pay for the services their child needs. CMH also provides services for people over age 21 with cystic fibrosis, including prescription medications, medical supplies, special formula, and public health nursing visits. **While CMH is a resource for some patients enrolled in Medicaid, these important line items also help privately insured CF families with their out-of-pocket costs, allowing them to maintain their commercial insurance and sometimes diverting them from public coverage.**

Recognizing that these are unprecedented times, we must work together to develop a budget that not only addresses the ongoing health care crisis but also maintains funding for state programs that support the well-being of Ohioans. Both the Medically Handicapped Children line item and the Targeted Health Care Services – Over 21 line item within CMH’s budget remain more important than ever in helping those with CF access the care and treatments they need to stay healthy in these uncertain times.

We thank you for all that you are doing to ensure the health and safety of state residents in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and reiterate that now is not the time to cut funding for programs that serve those with complex conditions like CF. Please stand with us as we work to ensure the Children with Medical Handicaps Program remains at the “As Introduced” funding level in HB 110.

If you have any questions, please contact [contact]. Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

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[1]

[https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fneed-extra-precautions%2Fgroups-at-higher-risk.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fneed-extra-precautions%2Fgroups-at-higher-risk.html)

Sincerely,

Senator Bob Hackett



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Representative Tim Ginter



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Senator Kenny Yuko



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Representative Scott Lipps



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