



**HB 110 Testimony**  
**Senate Finance – Health and Human Services Sub-Committee**  
**Thursday, May 6, 2021**  
**By Carly Salamone, Director, Northwest Ohio Pathways HUB**  
**The Hospital Council of Northwest Ohio**

**Ohio Commission of Minority Health Funding:  
Panel on the Certified Pathways Community HUB Model  
to Reduce Infant Mortality and Address Health Disparities**  
**Carly Salamone, MPH, Director, Northwest Ohio Pathways HUB**  
**Hospital Council of Northwest Ohio**

Good Morning Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Minority Member Antonio, and esteemed members of the Senate Health Committee. My name is Carly Salamone, and I am the Director of the Northwest Ohio Pathways HUB.

Funding to the Ohio Commission of Minority Health over the last decade has helped to bring the certified Pathways Community HUB model to scale in Ohio communities that are experiencing the highest rates of infant mortality.

Established in 2007, the Northwest Ohio Pathways HUB was one of the first three certified Pathways HUBs in the United States and the first certified HUB in Ohio. As one of the largest operating HUBs in the country, we contract with 12 health, social service, and community organizations – including hospitals, minority-focused organizations, faith-based organizations, and homeless shelters – that employ 45 Community Health Workers (CHWs) and their Supervisors. These CHWs work primarily with at-risk pregnant women to address health and health-related social needs. Care coordination is paid for through contracts with all five Ohio Medicaid managed care plans and other funders. The Ohio Commission of Minority Health has championed our HUB's development, as well as the development of the HUB network statewide, through funding and technical assistance.

Over the last 5 years, the Northwest Ohio Pathways HUB has provided care coordination services to nearly 7,000 Ohioans, 80% of whom were pregnant or had young children in the home. During this time, we have seen tremendous success in improving birth outcomes and decreasing infant mortality, especially among African American babies. Pregnant African American women that were enrolled in the Northwest Ohio Pathways HUB for at least 120 days had a low-birth-weight rate of 11%, compared to 14.2% for Lucas County; and a preterm birth rate of 10.4%, compared to 14.6% for the Lucas County. During the same period, infant mortality rates for enrolled African American women in the HUB was 10.9 per 1,000 live births, compared to 15.1 for Lucas County. The infant mortality rate for all clients enrolled in the HUB was 5.3, compared to 8.3 for

Lucas County. This is truly amazing as all women enrolled in the HUB have multiple risk factors for poor birth outcomes.

In the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, when many service providers were closing their doors and community needs were at their highest, our Community Health Workers never stopped working for their clients. Conducting virtual visits, dropping off items on their porches, completing housing applications over the phone, getting them to their medical care, and making sure they had all the necessary PPE, CHWs never slowed down. This is evidenced by the outcomes they were able to achieve DESPITE these uncertain times, including connecting 200 clients to educational programs and employment.

Pathways CHWs are tasked with identifying and addressing a variety of risk factors for Ohioans in greatest need. The Pathways HUB then identifies and addresses gaps in community needs by working with partners to identify solutions. In Northwest Ohio, collaborative partnerships with government entities and community organizations are working to address the two greatest needs in our community--housing and transportation.

Over the last 3 years, the HUB has provided 71 homeless and housing unstable families and pregnant women with long term, stable housing, and in 2021 has been awarded another 40 housing choice vouchers from our local housing authority, bringing the total to 90. Additionally, the HUB has provided nearly 1,400 pregnant women and families with an annual bus pass and access to paratransit door-to-door services through a partnership with our local transit authority.

Communities are drawn to the HUB model because of its ability to align community resources around the families that need them the most. When a HUB develops solutions to these system barriers, it does not just benefit the clients of one agency, but it benefits the clients of all agencies connected to the HUB, which creates efficiencies and reduces service duplication.

We are grateful for the funding you provide to the Ohio Commission of Minority Health. Currently, Pathways HUBs funded by the Commission on Minority Health have a 55-county service area, but due to budgetary restraints, the Commission can only fund work in 17 of those counties. Additional funding to the Ohio Commission on Minority Health would significantly impact the reach of these HUBs to provide services to even more Ohioans in need.

For more than a decade, the Commission has been a champion for our local efforts to reduce health disparities through the Pathways Community HUB Model. This work has saved money and most important, it has saved lives and more children are reaching their first birthday and beyond. I'd be happy to answer any questions you have at this time.

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