



**Dave Greenspan
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The MetroHealth System
HB 74 -Proponent Testimony
Senate Transportation Committee
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Chair Kunze, Vice Chair Reineke and Ranking Member Antonio, thank you for providing me the opportunity to provide proponent testimony to House Bill 74, the Transportation Budget on behalf of The MetroHealth System in Cleveland, Ohio. My name is Dave Greenspan and I am the Special Projects Liaison to the Chief of Staff at The MetroHealth System. We are the safety-net health system for Cuyahoga County, caring for the most unresourced 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.

As many of you know, because I served with most of you in the last General Assembly and with some of you in the House of Representatives, I have long been a strong supporter of public transportation. Obviously, I'm here today in a different capacity – that of representing The MetroHealth System. But I chaired the House Finance Sub-Committee on Transportation in each of the past two General Assembly's, and I am here to ask that at a minimum, the Senate maintain the House passed version of the Transportation Budget's funding for Public Transportation – and possibly, consider an increase.

You have all heard the benefits of public transportation for promoting the overall economic and social welfare of Ohioans, but I'd like to emphasize today one positive impact of public transportation that often is overlooked– and that is in the delivery of healthcare and related services.

I want to talk briefly about an important topic, especially among my new colleagues at MetroHealth: "The Social Determinants of Health." Those are the non-medical drivers that affect a wide-range of health and quality-of-life outcomes and risks. Researchers believe that up to 80 percent of ones health is dependent on these factors which have nothing to do with the medical care delivered in a hospital, clinic or provider's office.

Three of the many "Social Determinants of Health" are:

1. Availability of resources to meet daily needs (e.g., safe housing and local food markets)
2. Access to educational, economic, and job opportunities, and
3. Access to health care services.

We often think of public transportation in relation the first two ,but is every bit as vital when it comes to accessing health care.

For many, public transportation is the only available form of transportation --period. In many communities, hospitals, doctors and dentist offices, mental health services, pharmacies, dialysis facilities and other healthcare sites are located on public transportation routes -- by design. Think about that. In your community, whether it's Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati or a smaller city such as Springfield or Bowling Green, I'll bet these facilities are located on or near public transportation opportunities.

In Northeast Ohio our public transit systems offer, rail, bus, trolley and paratransit services. We are fortunate to have these options. However, let's not forget that public transit, in some form, exists in some 70 of our 88 counties reaching over 94.5% of the state's population. In every one of those places, public transportation is a lifeline connecting residents to jobs, shopping and health care. That means funding public transportation is not an urban issue, it's an Ohio issue.

Public transportation enables The MetroHealth System to provide care to residents in our community who otherwise might not seek the preventive, routine, urgent or even the emergency care they need.

To put this in perspective, data that I received from The Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority's (RTA) website highlights that up to 20% (1 in 5) of their ridership is from two routes. One is the Healthline on Euclid Avenue which serves the Cleveland Clinic and University Hospitals with close proximity to the Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center. The other is The MetroHealth Line which runs along West 25th Street and it serves The MetroHealth System. Both lines operate 24/7 -- for obvious reasons.

Another public transit service, not as widely known but certainly significantly important, are Paratransit Services. They are designed specifically to meet the needs of the disabled customers who are unable to use regular RTA buses and trains. Paratransit provides door-to-door service, with 80 vehicles owned and operated by RTA, as well as an additional 80 vehicles operated by three private providers.

To summarize and reiterate my recommendation: I would encourage the Senate, at a minimum to maintain the House passed public transportation funding appropriation and strongly consider increasing it for the reasons I've just detailed

In each of your communities with public transit, and that's most of you, you have constituents for whom this service is, literally, their lifeline.

Please support public transit funding.

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.

The MetroHealth Glick Center, a new 11-floor hospital, is under construction on the system's main campus in Cleveland and is scheduled to welcome its first patients in October 2022. The billion-dollar project is the cornerstone of a wider neighborhood revitalization effort led by the system and its partners in the community.

For more information, visit metrohealth.org.