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Tavia Galonski State Representative

Co-Chair Oelslager, Co-Chair Callender, Vice Chair Scherer, Ranking Member Cera, and my colleagues on the House Finance Committee, thank you for letting me provide sponsor testimony today for House Bill 592.

House Bill 592 would appropriate \$10 million from the GRF to the Ohio Department of Health for distribution to the Association of Community Health Centers and their response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This legislation would also declare an emergency due to the pandemic.

Community Health Centers are non-profit health care providers that aim to provide healthcare to underserved populations regardless of their insurance coverage. Throughout Ohio there are over 400 sites providing care covering 71 of the 88 counties. Breaking it down further, just last year Ohio's Community Health Centers provided care to over 854,000 patients. Nationwide Community Health Centers are the nation's largest primary care network, serving more than 29 million patients. The unique nature of Community Health Centers provide holistic care often providing medical, dental, behavioral, pharmacy, and vision care all under one roof.

Now as we continue to fight the COVID-19 pandemic Community Health Centers, like many other healthcare providers, have had to pivot to address the unique circumstances. Latest numbers show that approximately 88% of Community Health Centers have COVID-19 testing capacity and approximately 90% of them have walk up or drive up capacity for testing. As we know this virus has been disproportionately impacting minorities and communities of color. With Community Health Center's mission to provide quality healthcare to underserved populations, they are providing a vital role during this pandemic. If we truly want to address this disparity, we need to provide more funding to the healthcare services the community is utilizing.

Co-Chair Oelslager, Co-Chair Callender, Vice Chair Scherer, Ranking Member Cera, and my colleagues on the House Finance Committee, thank you for your attention today. I am happy to answer any questions from the committee.