Senator Dave Burke, Chairman
Committee on Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Ohio Senate
May 20, 2019

Chairman Burke,

My name is Diana King and I am writing on behalf of Northern Ohioans for Budget Legislation Equality (NOBLE) www.organizeohio.org/noble. NOBLE is an organization that works to bring the voices of low-income consumers to state budget issues. NOBLE also works on local issues that are funded in all or part by the state budget.

NOBLE is supportive of HB 11 and its significant efforts to improve health outcomes tied to infant mortality rates in Ohio. We are grateful to the co-sponsors, Representatives Manning and Howse for introducing this important bill and to the Ohio House for passing the bill unanimously. We are writing to request the Senate Health, Human Services & Medicaid Committee finalize hearings and pass the bill onto the full Senate as soon as possible.

We support the comprehensive approach in HB 11 to address four elements of prenatal health: smoking cessation, dental hygiene, lead education, and group prenatal care. We would like to specifically highlight the positive impact of group prenatal care.

The group prenatal care model has significantly improved maternal and child health outcomes, particularly for African American women being served across the state of Ohio. As a model, group prenatal care allows patients to take part in their own care by measuring and recording their own blood pressure, temperature and weight. This program also provides individual health assessments to patients and the opportunity for group discussion on important health topics, ultimately increasing information-sharing and overall social support for patients. Expanding group prenatal care throughout Ohio can save lives and health care dollars with less days in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) for our newborns.

In addition, we are supportive of The First Year Cleveland Centering Pregnancy Coalition and their partners in the work that they have done which shows the importance of this bill. The First Year Cleveland Centering Pregnancy Coalition in Cuyahoga County is the largest Group Prenatal Care system in Ohio, serving more than 1,000 expectant parents. The First Year Cleveland Centering Pregnancy Coalition, working together, with the community, was able to reduce infant mortality rates for white babies to 2.4 in 2017, one of the lowest in the country. In 2018, Cleveland had a decade lowest African American premature birth rate and infant mortality rate of 14.9. With

increased funding, First Year Cleveland a will be able to serve more parents, and build upon the current momentum.

The lower mortality rates result in savings as well. Medicaid Policy Research published in April 2016 estimates that for every 30 expectant moms served in the Centering model of care, there is a $69,799 cost savings.

Expanding group prenatal care will not only improve maternal and child health outcomes, it will create a more cost effective, sustainable health care business model. It will drive better maternal and health outcomes and, for the first time in Ohio, will give us the unique opportunity to align prenatal care systems and home visiting programs into one seamless system of care for all expectant parents in group prenatal care.

We are looking forward to supporting efforts to move the bill expeditiously through the committee process and ultimately to a vote on the Senate floor. The increased support for infant mortality efforts this bill provides will allow our respected partners at First Year Cleveland and others in this field an opportunity to continue to grow their group prenatal care programs.

Respectfully,

Diana King

cc: Senator Nicki Antonio, Ranking Member
        Senator Stephen Huffman, Vice Chair
        Senator Theresa Gavarone
        Senator Bob Hackett
        Senator Jay Hottinger
        Senator Stephanie Kunze
        Senator Peggy Lehner
        Senator Tina Maharath
        Senator Kristina Roegner
        Senator Kirk Schuring
        Senator Cecil Thomas