

March 16, 2023

Northern Ohioans for Budget Legislation Equality/NOBLE

Brian Mallory

Testimony before the Health and Human Services Sub-Committee of the House Finance Committee

HB 33

Good morning, Chairman Caruthers; Ranking Member Liston and esteemed representatives of the committee. My name is Brian Mallory I live in Cleveland and am a constituent of Ohio HD-20 and SD-23. I am also a resident in a senior building managed by CMHA. I am here to share my experience with Ohio Medicaid.

I have been a recipient of Medicaid since 2016 due to my chronic asthma. My overall experience has been good. I have gone through several redeterminations and have found the process to be straightforward.

During the pandemic Public Health Emergency, my services continued unabated, and I had no problems. The state should establish a Public Health Emergency (PHE) to extend Medicaid coverage to those who stand to lose eligibility. There are residents in my building facing grave difficulties if they lose their Medicaid coverage. There is a need to include over-the-counter medication and supplies through Medicaid Managed Care plans just like in private plans. This should be incorporated in any statewide health care plan. There is a great need to continue Medicaid Expansion for myself, my neighbors, and other low-income Ohioans.

I believe that I represent many in my building. I believe that other seniors in my building have a similar story. Since I recently turned 60 last month, I now qualify to for the pilot program geared to people like that requires me to recertify less frequently. I know that this program is a boon to many of my neighbors and I suggest that it be expanded to cover more. Instead of requiring me to recertify every year, I now must do it every 36 months and notify my county JFS office after 18 months if there has been any change in my status.

This eases the burden on Seniors like me that have challenges due to the digital divide. Many of my neighbors are not “tech savvy” and the Internet is like a foreign language to them. Anything that eases the burden of reporting, and submitting documentation is greatly appreciated. Again, I ask that this pilot program be expanded to encompass more people.

Lastly, let me state that I believe that healthcare is a human right as an American and Ohioan. A person in their “golden years” should not be saddled with financial or other burdens due to a lack of healthcare access or cost. Because one in five Ohioans are above the age of 60 like me, it is imperative that our public policy address the needs of these people.

Thank you and God bless.