



**SENATE FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND MEDICAID**

Chairman Hackett  
Vice Chair Tavares

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Tara Britton, Director of Public Policy and Advocacy  
Written Testimony

Chairman Hackett, Vice Chair Tavares, and members of the Senate Finance Health and Medicaid Subcommittee, thank you for taking my testimony today. My name is Tara Britton and I am the Director of Public Policy and Advocacy at The Center for Community Solutions, a nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank that aims to improve health, social and economic conditions through research, policy analysis and communication. I submit testimony today on proposals in the budget regarding senior nutrition and HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention.

**Senior Nutrition**

The House cut 1.5% from the Senior Community Services Block Grant in both FY18 and FY19, a total decrease from \$7.1 million to \$6.9 million. These cuts have been a trend as the Senior Community Services Block Grant has seen drastic cuts over the past fifteen years. This even deeper cut will have a significant impact on seniors' access to community based services such as nutrition supports, transportation and additional services that allow seniors the ability to remain in their homes and in the community for longer.

In addition to the nutrition supports offered by the Senior Community Services Block Grant, the House-passed version of the budget cut the National Senior Services Corps line item (GRF 490506) by 1.5 percent totaling \$7,242 in cuts over the biennium. This line item not only assists seniors with additional income that allows them the freedom to stay in their community longer, but assists with senior staffing for food banks as well.

The House-passed version of the budget cut funding to the Ohio Association of Foodbanks by \$1 million over the biennium, \$500,000 in each fiscal year. The as introduced version had left funding flat in this category. Increasing the appropriation amount for the TANF State Maintenance of Effort line item for the Ohio Association of Foodbanks by \$5.5 million annually will allow for the maintenance of much needed senior services as 18.5 percent of food bank recipients are seniors.

## **HIV/AIDS Care and Prevention**

Each year in the state of Ohio there are between 900 and 1,000 newly diagnosed cases of HIV.<sup>i</sup> In the midst of an opiate crisis, cutting funding to HIV prevention by nearly 20% compared to the as introduced budget, as was done in the House-passed version of the budget, is unwise. The GRF line item for HIV prevention and treatment was entirely dedicated to prevention in this budget, as there are other non-GRF funds available to support HIV care and treatment, and there was a need to increase funding for HIV prevention. We recommend that the Senate restore the cut of \$600,000 per year, to the AIDS Prevention and Treatment line item (440444), in order to support HIV prevention in Ohio.

The House version of the budget also made appropriation reductions to the line items where federal funds (440618) and drug rebates (440609) for HIV services are deposited. These federal funds and pharmaceutical rebates can only be spent on HIV-related services and reducing the appropriation authority could hamper the Department of Health's ability to respond to needs in the state.

Thank you for taking the time to read this testimony. Please contact me with any questions at [fbritton@communitysolutions.com](mailto:fbritton@communitysolutions.com) or 614-221-4945.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.odh.ohio.gov/-/media/ODH/ASSETS/Files/health-statistics---disease---hiv-aids/2015-Data-Tables.pdf?la=en>