



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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John Corlett
President & Executive Director
216-272-1723
jcorlett@communitysolutions.com

The Center for Community Solutions' Statement on Ohio's Biennial Budget

CLEVELAND, OH – The state budget is always a back-and-forth process. We are grateful to the General Assembly for its work over the last several months, and especially within these last few weeks, to pass a budget that moves Ohio forward. This budget pushes Ohio's Medicaid program in a more person-centered direction, including bringing coordinated care to nearly 60,000 of Ohio's children with complex behavioral health conditions and providing coverage for more new moms a year after giving birth. It also increases funding for Adult Protective Services (APS), brings internet access to more Ohioans, and enacts a policy that will streamline access to food and nutrition for older adults and Ohioans with disabilities.

We appreciate the work of members of the Conference Committee and General Assembly to lessen the harm that would have been caused by implementing strict asset tests and change reporting for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP is a critical program for Ohioans who are struggling and for those who have fallen on hard times, and these provisions would have eliminated the ability for this program to serve as a safety net. While there are already stringent requirements in SNAP that ensure the integrity of the program, we stand ready to engage in the study committee that plans to review issues of alleged fraud and are prepared to bring diverse perspectives to that process. Additionally, we are grateful for the conferees maintaining the inclusion of the Elderly/Disabled Simplified Application Project (EDSAP) which will ensure more older adults and people with disabilities can access and maintain coverage for SNAP while easing the bureaucratic burden on county Job and Family Services offices.

Regarding our state's health delivery system, we are encouraged by some provisions and concerned about the impact of others. Unfortunately, the provision regarding medical consciousness not only failed to be properly discussed as a policy matter before the body and the public, but also has the potential to advance discriminatory clinical practices based on race, class, geography, language, gender or other relevant social factors, notably impacting LGBTQ+



Ohioans. As an organization that regularly researches policy issues tied to measurable health disparities in populations, and is committed to closing gaps in those related health outcomes, we feel this provision will exacerbate those problems.

Conversely, policies ensuring mothers have Medicaid coverage for a full year after giving birth will improve the health of Ohio moms, and we are grateful to the Conference Committee for maintaining this provision in the budget. Also, by protecting procurement, the General Assembly protected years-long reform efforts to reduce overhead, increase quality, end custody relinquishment and support transparency in pharmacy. Similarly, we are thankful to see an increase in funding for APS that will allow for one full-time Adult Protective Services caseworker in each county in Ohio. These are issues the General Assembly and governor can agree will help Ohioans, and we look forward to the enactment of a state budget with these provisions intact.

We want to thank Governor DeWine, Senate President Huffman, Speaker Cupp, Chairman Dolan, Chairman Oelslager and the other members of the Conference Committee and General Assembly for their hard work to finalize the state budget. A state budget is never entirely perfect, but the totality of these policies will move Ohio in the right direction as we all recover from an unprecedented public health and economic crisis.

1501 Euclid Avenue • Suite 310 • Cleveland, OH 44115 • P: (216) 781-2944 • F: (216) 781-2988

175 S. Third Street • Suite 350 • Columbus • OH 43215 • P: 614-745-0740

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