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OHIO SENATE MEDICAID COMMITTEE
CHAIRMAN ROMANCHUK
MAY 11, 2023

Tara Britton, Director of Public Policy and Advocacy

Chairman Romanchuk, Vice Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Ingram and members of the Senate Medicaid Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written interested party testimony on House Bill 33. The Center for Community Solutions (CCS) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank that aims to improve health, social and economic conditions through research, policy analysis and communication. I will address a few areas of House Bill 33 in my testimony, all pertaining to Medicaid.

Certification of and Medicaid reimbursement for doulas

We continue to support ongoing work across the legislative and executive branches that would create a certification process for doulas and provide Medicaid reimbursement for doula services. We are supportive of achieving this through the budget process, as this would kickstart the development of rules and a payment mechanism through Medicaid and are in communication across both chambers to move this work forward. We are grateful for bipartisan support of this issue in the House to add this into House Bill 33 and are eager to work with everyone in the Senate to reconcile the language across legislation to move this policy forward in the budget.

Increasing access to doula services has been proven to improve maternal and infant health outcomes, especially for Black moms and babies. The involvement of doulas into the normal course of care before, during and after childbirth has proven to provide better birth outcomes for mothers and infants compared to those that are without. Doula assisted mothers are four times less likely to have a low-birth-weight baby (one of the leading drivers of infant mortality), two times less likely to experience a birth complication involving themselves or their baby and significantly more likely to initiate breastfeeding.

Medicaid coverage

We support the Governor's proposal to increase Medicaid eligibility to 300% of the federal poverty level for children and pregnant women. This policy will go a long way in ensuring continuity of coverage and access to care. This will also build upon the work done in the last state budget that expanded coverage for pregnant women from 60 days to 12 months postpartum.

To further build upon these beneficial coverage expansions, we are grateful to the House for its inclusion of continuous coverage for kids on Medicaid up to their 4th birthday. We encourage the Senate to maintain this provision. Continuous coverages means that once a child in this age range is enrolled in Medicaid, they would stay enrolled without an annual redetermination, until the age the continuous

coverage ends. Our [research](#) shows that when parents lose Medicaid coverage, for whatever reason, there are significant rates of coverage loss for their kids too, even though these children may still be eligible. This is because we cover kids up to a higher income range than adults. Other states have adopted or are exploring policies that would provide continuous coverage to young children and we know what a difference this will make for continuity of care and access for Ohio's kids.

Conclusion

We thank you for the time you're taking to hear from stakeholders on the budget. I am happy to answer any questions or provide follow up information. You can reach me at tbritton@communitysolutions.com.