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COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS
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June 28, 2017

The Honorable John Kasich
Office of the Governor
77 South High Street
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Governor Kasich,

As a former Ohio Medicaid Director, I know the challenges many Ohioans face and believe you took the courageous and necessary step in expanding Medicaid in Ohio - thank you for your commitment to low-income families, those suffering with mental illness, chronic diseases, and victims of the opiate epidemic. Unfortunately, the state budget process, which received a conference vote late Tuesday night, enacted a provision to freeze Medicaid enrollment, contradicting your recent efforts to improve the health and quality of life for all Ohioans.

While I understand that House Bill 49 tries to address some of the foundational resource issues facing Ohio, it does so in a manner that hinders the ability of the state to address the needs of some of the most vulnerable and I am concerned with the following:

- **The Medicaid freeze would make the benefits cliff worse for many of Ohio's working families to move up and out of poverty.** The proposed freeze creates a disincentive for some workers to accept a raise or increased hours because even a small increase in pay would mean they could never qualify for Medicaid health coverage again, even if their financial circumstances change. This impact is especially great for low-income working adults without children¹. Almost half of those Ohioans who are currently eligible for Medicaid saw an increase in their overall health since being enrolled in Medicaid.²
- **A freeze is likely to remove the path to recovery many Ohioans seek.** Of the \$1 billion Ohio has spent to combat opioid abuse and other drug addictions in 2016, an estimated \$650 million was paid for by Medicaid for drug addiction and behavioral health services, including \$279 million that was made available through the expansion.³
- **The great work you as a governor have made on behalf of many in our state living with mental illness will be thwarted and reversed.** One-third of Ohioans who were enrolled in the Medicaid program through expansion were found to have anxiety or

depression, conditions that severally affect individual's quality of life, employment and ability to live an active and healthy lifestyle. Almost half of the Group VIII population accessed mental healthcare through expansion. As of April 2017, more than 580,000 Ohioans with behavioral health needs have been able to access services through expanded Medicaid coverage.⁴

This provision will move Ohio backward, Governor, and I believe it does not deserve your signature. I respectfully request you veto the Medicaid freeze in House Bill 49.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at any time should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Corlett". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John R. Corlett

President and Executive Director

The Center for Community Solutions

¹http://www.communitysolutions.com/index.php?option=com_lyftenbloggie&view=entry&year=2017&month=06&day=22&id=76:ohio-senate-medicaid-provisions-could-jeopardize-self-reliance

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³ <http://www.healthtransformation.ohio.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=D-ePEVPsRqQ%3d&tabid=136>

⁴ <http://www.healthtransformation.ohio.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=D-ePEVPsRqQ%3d&tabid=136>