

# Expansion of Medicaid will save lives

As the director of the Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Board of Franklin County, I know that with Medicaid expansion, many working families in our community will have access to the mental-health and drug-addiction treatment services that our system provides.

It is estimated that people with mental illness die nearly 25 years younger than the general population. Not only will the Medicaid expansion plan save our communities millions of dollars, it will save lives.

These investments will give Franklin County the ability to provide important services to people who live with a mental illness or drug addiction — services that treat the whole person using integrated physical- and mental-health-care services.

The expansion also will make local dollars available to expand critical supportive services, including permanent supportive housing, peer-support and prevention services that give people the help and education they need to be successful.

Additionally, study after study indicates that taxpayers will spend significantly more money as untreated individuals lose their ability to work and end up in emergency rooms, involved with the court system or other situations that cost more than medication, therapy and support services for those with a mental illness or addiction.

I urge legislative leaders to strongly support the governor's Medicaid-expansion proposal and give our neighbors, friends and family members the opportunity to live healthy, productive lives.

DAVID ROYER

Chief Executive Officer

ADAMH Board of Franklin County

Columbus

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