

Thomas M. Cooney
3536 Edwards Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45208

Hamilton County Board of Commissioners
Hon. Mr. Chris Monzel, President
Hon. Mr. Greg Hartmann
Hon. Mr. Todd Portune
138 East Court Street Room 603
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

RE: Indigent Care Tax Levy Review 2014
Family Services and Treatment Levy Review 2014
Hamilton County Tax Levy Review Committee (TLRC)

Dear Commissioners,

Enclosed with this letter are two reports of the Tax Levy Review Committee (TLRC) for 2014. One report is regarding the Family Services and Treatment Levy and the non-hospital services funded by the Indigent Care Levy and one report regarding the Indigent Care Levy hospital portion. First, I want to thank the County Commission for appointing the dedicated and talented members of the TLRC. It is my understanding that the TLRC review process is a unique one in Ohio, but one I think is very beneficial. Our method of hiring consultants, meetings with agencies and having public hearings allows us to have a significant amount of information to analyze.

The dedication and hard work of the other members of the Committee should be recognized. Each member served on a subcommittee that conducted an intense review of the agencies assigned to it. The Committee for the Family Services and Treatment Levy and the non-hospital services funded by the Indigent Care Levy was chaired by Chris Habel and included Dan Unger, Gwen McFarlin and Heather Harlow. The committee for the hospital portion of the Indigent Care Levy was chaired by Mike Wilson and included John Silverman, Eppa Rixey, Mark Quarry, John Smith and Ed Steiner. The entire TLRC met numerous times to conduct its work. In addition the subcommittees held numerous meetings with consultants, agency staff and members of the public. We had excellent participation from every one of the members.

The Committee relied on both the County staff as well as outside consultants for assistance. We were especially helped by Lisa Webb.

Each of the reports was adopted by the full committee. A few highlights of our reports include:

1. We have recommended that both levies be placed on the ballot at their current millage levels.

2. We have recommended that the Health and Hospitalization Levy be renewed for a three-year term. We recommended a three-year term in this levy in order to better gauge the impact of the Affordable Care Act. While there is much more clarity regarding this than existed three years ago, the full impact when it is fully phased in is not yet known. In addition, the Ohio Medicaid expansion has served to make many more individuals eligible for Medicaid and that impact will be more readily known in three years.
3. We have recommended funding UCMC at \$13.5 million per year and Children's at \$5 million per year. We believe that this level of funding, together with the carryover balance from the current levy will be sufficient to allow them to continue their current indigent programs.
4. We believe that funding should be provided to fund a County Healthcare Officer. The County Healthcare officer should be an individual who has health care finance experience and could understand the ramification of the current health care reimbursement landscape and be able to oversee the county's various health initiatives funded by tax levies.
5. The current millage rate for the Family Services and Treatment Levy will result in a 10 percent cut in the funding for these programs.
6. We have recommended that the Strategies to End Homelessness funding be increased to an amount not to exceed 25 percent of the operating costs of the shelters. This funding will be phased in as their shelters are completed.
7. We have recommended that the contract between NaphCare Inc. and the County be renegotiated, rather than renewed, with a goal of improving the management of costs.
8. We have recommended that the budget for the inmate security be capped at current levels with an inflation adjustment so that the funding from the levies can be stabilized.

We have also noted that certain services that are mandatory for the County to fund are covered by these levies. We believe that it would be beneficial if more of these mandatory services could be funded from the general fund as the County's financial condition improves.

Sincerely,



Thomas M. Cooney
TMC/cms