The Honorable Mike Shirkey  
P.O. Box 30036  
Lansing, MI 48909-7536  

April 18, 2018  

Re: SB 897 (Substitute S-2): Med. Assistance Work Requirements  

Dear Senator Shirkey and the Senate Committee on Michigan Competitiveness,  

On behalf of the 1,111 individuals living with cystic fibrosis (CF) in Michigan, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation writes to express our concern with SB 897 (Substitute S-2): “Med. Assistance Work Requirements” which would create additional barriers to Medicaid eligibility and access to medically necessary benefits by adding work requirements and a lock-out period for failure to comply.  

Cystic fibrosis (CF) is a life-threatening genetic disease that affects 30,000 children and adults in the United States. CF causes the body to produce thick, sticky mucus that clogs the lungs and digestive system, which can lead to life-threatening infections. As a complex, multi-system condition, CF requires targeted, specialized treatment and medications. Medicaid is a crucial source of coverage for patients with serious and chronic health care needs, including over 200 adults living with cystic fibrosis in Michigan. Given the role that Medicaid plays in helping this patient population access the high-quality care and treatment they need to maintain or improve their health, we urge the state to ensure the needs of CF patients are met as the state makes changes to the medical assistance program.  

Many people with CF work full or part-time; however, the ability to work can vary over time with changes in health status. Declines in health status due to pulmonary exacerbations, infections, and other events are common and can take someone out of the workforce for significant periods of time. Patients bear a significant treatment burden on a daily basis, amounting to hours of chest physiotherapy, delivery of nebulized treatments, administration of intravenous antibiotics, and/or other activities required to maintain or improve their health. Maintaining sustained employment may not be possible due to the time required to undergo necessary treatment, which includes an intense and time-consuming daily regimen.  

We appreciate the state’s decision to exempt from work requirements those determined to be “medically frail” or who have a medical condition that limits their ability to work, which reflects the important reality that health status can significantly affect an individual’s ability to search for and sustain employment. While an individual with CF may fall into these exemption categories, we are unsatisfied with the lack of specificity and potential bureaucratic hurdles involved in obtaining an exemption for someone with CF. As such, we ask you to revise the bill to specifically and automatically exempt people with CF from this requirement.  

Furthermore, we are concerned with the proposal to lock an individual out of Medicaid for one-year should they fail to meet the work or reporting requirements. A lock-out period could be life threatening.
for someone with a condition like CF should they not be flagged as exempt. Specifically, for those with cystic fibrosis, interruptions in coverage can lead to lapses in care, irreversible lung damage, and costly hospitalizations – compromising the health and well-being of those with the disease.

The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation appreciates the opportunity to provide input on these important policy changes. As the health care landscape continues to evolve, we look forward to working with the state of Michigan to ensure access to high-quality, specialized CF care and improve the lives of all people with cystic fibrosis. Please consider us a resource moving forward.

Sincerely,

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CC: Governor Rick Snyder
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