



WHITMAN-WALKER HEALTH

Mailing Address:
Whitman-Walker (ETMC–Temporary Offices)
1342 Florida Ave., NW
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BEFORE THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

TESTIMONY OF WHITMAN-WALKER HEALTH ON BILL 33-350, THE HOME VISITING SERVICES PILOT PROGRAM ESTABLISHMENT ACT September 28, 2017

Pursuant to the Committee’s Notice of Hearing, Whitman-Walker Health (WWH or Whitman-Walker) submits this written testimony in strong support of the “Home Visiting Services Pilot Program Establishment Act of 2017,” Bill 22-350.

As a federally qualified community health center with particular expertise in HIV treatment and prevention and in LGBT health, WWH provides the highest quality medical, dental and behavioral health care, legal assistance, and community health services to thousands of District residents, including mothers and expecting mothers who would benefit from the implementation of a District-wide Health Me Grow program.

Since February 2015, Whitman-Walker Youth Services – formerly Metro TeenAIDS – has provided a wide range of health-related services to DC youth and their families at our site near Eastern Market. In calendar year 2016, we provided these services to more than 3,000 young people and to a number of their families. More than 80% of these clients were DC residents.

One of our important Youth Services programs, STABLE Families, supports families affected by HIV, including HIV-positive pregnant women. Services provided through STABLE Families include care navigation, with Whitman-Walker staff working with the family to identify barriers to stability and well-being, and providing services at the location that best meets the family’s needs.

Bill 22-350 would provide much needed support for many of the DC residents we serve through STABLE Families, and to the families of other clients of our youth programs. More broadly, WWH has significant numbers of low-income patients and clients in our other programs – including our HIV medical care, Community Health programs, and legal services – whose families who live in poverty or near-poverty, and who are disproportionately burdened with health disparities, housing instability, and incarceration. Research has found these experiences to have profound effects on a child’s short and long-term development. The home visiting services provided through the pilot Health Me Grow program promise to significantly improve the lives of these women and young children, and provide entire families with a more nurturing and healthy environment.

The benefits of home visiting services are evident to us through our Mobile Outreach Retention & Engagement (MORE) program, which sends health care providers and care navigators into the homes of people living with HIV who have fallen out of care. We applaud the District’s foresight in establishing a program to deliver home visitation services to another population that greatly needs those services, and to provide funding to evaluate those services to further improve their effectiveness.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our views. If we can be of further assistance, please contact Guillaume Bagal, (202) 797-4421, gbagal@whitman-walker.org.

Respectfully submitted,



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