

Issue 19: Cuyahoga County Health & Human Services Levy

Proposed Tax Levy (replacement and reduction)

Health and Human Services

A replacement of a portion of an existing levy, being a reduction of 0.1 mill, to constitute a tax for the benefit of the County of Cuyahoga for the purpose of supplementing general fund appropriations for health and human or social services at a rate not exceeding 2.9 mills for each one dollar of valuation, which amounts to 29 cents for each one hundred dollars of valuation, for four years, commencing in 2006, first due in calendar year 2007.

Pros:

1. The levy will provide health and social service programs needed by all Cuyahoga County citizens, and it is a safety net for those most vulnerable – children, seniors, disabled, and the poor.
2. The levy provides critical emergency care at MetroHealth, the county's public hospital, for everyone; Life Flight, the Severe Burn Treatment Center, and Level 1 emergency trauma care. No other hospital provides these special services.
3. The levy is a replacement levy rather than a renewal levy and will bring additional funds at a time when more citizens need assistance due to job losses, reduced or lost health insurance, and lost pensions. Children need a healthy start in life and a strong start in school. As our senior population grows, they will need more services.

Cons:

1. The county should fund job development and training programs rather than human services. Citizens should have jobs and not be dependent on social programs.
2. MetroHealth should not rely on tax support; it should manage its funds as the other non-profit hospitals do.
3. The levy is called a replacement and reduction levy. It replaces a 3.0 mill levy with a 2.9 mill levy, but because it is a replacement rather than a renewal it will generate an additional \$27.3 million annually, thus it is a tax increase.