

**Testimony to the Montgomery County Council  
Annice Cody**

**September 15, 2020**

**Support**

**Special Appropriation to the County Government's Fiscal Year 2021 Operating Budget, Early Care and Education (ECE) Non-Departmental Account, Montgomery Moving Forward - ECE Coordinating Entity Plan, \$75,000 (Source of Funds: General Fund Reserves) and Amendment to FY21 Operating Budget Resolution 19-472 Section G, FY21 Designation of Entities for NonCompetitive Contract Award Status: Nonprofit Montgomery**

As a member of Montgomery Moving Forward's (MMF's) Leadership Group, I would like to thank each of you for your ongoing demonstrated support of Early Care and Education in Montgomery County and recognition of the economic and social imperative of a coordinated birth- to-five ECE system.

*Today I ask you to please vote in support of this Special Appropriation to ensure that there is an independent public-private coordinating entity to monitor and coordinate an ECE system on behalf of the entire community. As the board chair of Nexus Montgomery Regional Partnership, I am keenly aware of the value of a coordinating entity to maximize the effectiveness of cross-organizational stakeholders working toward a shared vision and to ensure the sustained momentum of that work.*

My role at Holy Cross Health, which focuses on building healthier communities, has underscored that:

- Access to high-quality early care and education from birth to five is a key indicator of healthy development and a major driver of school and life-long success.
- To make high-quality and affordable ECE accessible to more children, all of the stakeholders in the community must be involved--from County government to nonprofits and for-profits, health systems, libraries, faith communities, parents, and providers.
- To work well, a system needs a coordinating entity that can break down the existing silos and drive systemic change to improve outcomes for children and families.
- An independent public-private coordinating body will provide ongoing, system-wide programmatic coordination and hold the participants accountable for success on developmental outcomes.

As a member of MMF's coordinating entity advisory group, I have worked closely with MMF staff as they researched national and local models (including Nexus Montgomery), examined best practices, engaged community stakeholders, and began exploring the current organizational capacity of potential ECE entities in Montgomery County. I know MMF is uniquely positioned to continue this work and applaud the County Council's introduction of this special appropriation to allow MMF to continue it on behalf of the community.

***Annice Cody***

President, Holy Cross Health Network  
Holy Cross Health