

**Ohio House Finance Subcommittee on Health and Human Services**

**Testimony of:**

**Derek Pidgeon, Certified Peer Recovery Supporter**

**March 14, 2017**

Chairman Romanchuk, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Health and Human Services Subcommittee, good morning. My name is Derek Pidgeon and I am a Certified Peer Recovery Supporter and have been in recovery for almost two and a half years. A brief background of my life. I was born and raised in Mansfield Ohio. I graduated from Lexington high school. I also attended and graduated from Kent State University with a BA in Business management. Unfortunately during my years in college my substance abuse problems spun completely out of control. By the time I received my degree I had become physically dependent on prescription opiates. Within that next year my opiate addiction had progressed to heroin and I lost my best friend to this terrible disease. Needless to say this was an extremely difficult time of my life. Since my best friend's death I've had ups and downs, been in and out of treatment a couple times, but it had never seemed to stick. It wasn't until I almost lost everything and I felt in such despair till I truly wanted to stop using.

Since coming into recovery and being a part of Mansfield UMADAOP's medical assisted treatment program my life has been steadily getting better and better. The biggest difference from previous attempts at recovery and this time has been the ability to focus on treatment instead of focusing on simply not using. The medication has subsided all cravings for opiates and has allowed me to function in everyday life. This type of normalcy has given me the opportunity to work with UMADAOP's treatment team on my addictive behaviors, as well as learn crucially

needed tools to combat thoughts and cravings. Since attending UMADAOP I have successfully completed IOP and the facing addiction curriculum. I also have been titrating off the medication for quite some time. I am currently at one eighth of the dose I started on and plan on being completely off in the next few months. I was doing so well in my recovery that I got the chance to attend CCAR's Recovery Coach Academy at Mansfield UMADAOP. Since completing the course, Mr. Baker has given me the opportunity to work for Mansfield UMADAOP as a recovery coach. Being able to work with other recovering addicts has been extremely fulfilling. I can honestly say that I love what I'm doing. I am currently taking steps toward my CDCA and I'm very excited for the future. Thank you all for your time.