

Ohio House Finance Subcommittee on Health and Human Services
Testimony of:
Marie Higgins, Certified Ohio Peer Recovery Supporter
ARC County of Summit Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Services Board
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Chairman Romanchuk, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Health and Human Services Subcommittee, good *afternoon/morning*.

Good morning and thank you so much for this opportunity. My name is Marie Higgins and I am a certified Ohio Peer recovery supporter. I'm a person with lived experience in alcohol and drug addiction as well as mental health disorders. I have been alcohol and drug-free since August 24th 2015.

I personally have utilized the resources made available in Summit County by the ADAMH boards, such as detox to manage withdrawal, residential treatment programming, transitional housing programs, recovery housing as well as a graduate of the Summit County Recovery Court. I also attended six months of intense trauma therapy to aid in my mental health treatment that was Medicaid-funded. All of the services played a vital role in my recovery process.

Without funding being provided for the number of services I received, I believe I would probably not be alive today. I feel that funding is very critical to our community, especially during such a devastating time as this. Without the continued funding and Medicaid billing availability, many people such as me, a hopeless heroin addict, will not be given the life-changing opportunity to get clean and have a successful life restored to them.

I am today able to give back to the recovery community by providing support Services, which are funded by the ADAMH board, community-based services, as well as participate in panels such as this. These services provide support to family and friends of addicts. This has made me realize how much of an impact addiction has made not only on the person suffering from the disease of addiction but also the loved ones around them. What we are dealing with is a family disease and it is devastating our communities. Being part of the solution is important for all of us. Each and every one of us has a role in this epidemic, which brings me to why I'm here today.

Adding \$12 million per year for Community Based Services will offer hope for other addicts needing life-saving help. Also, as I mentioned, access to Medicaid funding is vital to our community because, as we know, there are approximately 700,000 Ohioans currently on Medicaid, many suffer from addiction and or mental health issues. Without assistance from the state, we will continue to see the number of opioid related deaths rise.

It has been an honor and a privilege today to speak on behalf of recovering addicts in our community and I hope that you will take into great consideration the concerns for continued coverage.

Thank you