



Ohio
Prevention
Advocacy
Network

**Ohio House of Representatives Health Committee
Ohio Prevention Advocacy Network
June 11, 2019**

Good morning, Chairman Merrin, Vice Chairman Manning, Ranking Member Boyd, and members of the House Health Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written-only testimony as an interested party in consideration of House Bill 12 (“HB 12”). The Ohio Prevention Advocacy Network (“OPAN”) is a coalition of prevention professionals and volunteers striving to establish safe, healthy and stable communities by elevating the voices of Ohio’s prevention experts.

OPAN applauds Representatives Manning and West for introducing this legislation which would establish the Ohio Children’s Behavioral Health Prevention Network Stakeholder Group (“Group”) and require the Group to make recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly. OPAN advocates for additional funding in three (3) core areas of prevention: school-based; community-based; and youth-led. HB 12 is a critical first step in ensuring proper investments in these core areas of quality evidence-based prevention services for youth in Ohio.

This testimony will focus on two components of the bill: first, the critical need in establishing this group to focus on increased investments for prevention services aimed at youth; and second, the essential coordinated efforts and data collection required by this legislation.

1) Prevention Services for Youth

As you know, prevention helps people develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to make good choices and promote positive behaviors. With more than half of all mental health disorders appearing prior to the age of 14 it is necessary to focus prevention services towards youth with the aim of reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors in communities and schools.¹ This has been done in various parts of the state and can be replicated statewide. By using current resources and services and expanding upon these best practices Ohio could become a leader in prevention.

This legislation will help shape the policies for prevention in schools, the community, and through youth-led programs. Prevention services address students with social and emotional issues especially those with adverse childhood experiences. This occurs through universal, selective, and indicated prevention strategies. By focusing efforts to an entire community,

¹ Kessler, R.C., et al. (2005). Prevalence, Severity, and Comorbidity of 12-Month DSM-IV Disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 62(6), 593–602. From <http://archpsyc.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=208671>

school, and the individual person, social norms will begin to change.² Investing in prevention will ensure the reduction of social instability, isolation, and dysfunction while promoting health and preventing the onset of both mental health and substance use disorders.

Research shows that each dollar spent on evidence-based substance misuse prevention programs produces nearly a \$10 return.³ In addition, evidenced-based programs that target skill building and positive decision making among school age youth have a return on investment up to \$17.25 for every dollar spent.⁴

2) Coordinated Efforts

HB 12 requires several key individuals to serve as members of the Group including, but not limited to: The Director of the Governor's Children's Initiatives; the Director of Health; the Director of Mental Health and Addiction Services; and Superintendent of Public Instruction; Children's Hospital Association; health centers; community behavioral health service providers; local alcohol, drug addiction, and mental health services boards; and schools. These organizations and agencies are instrumental in the provision of prevention services throughout the state for youth. Their inclusion is essential in ensuring a robust collaborative cross-system network that would be able to identify best-practices to implement in Ohio and elevate prevention as an essential part of the continuum of care.⁵

OPAN encourages the General Assembly and the Ohio Children's Behavioral Health Prevention Network Stakeholder Group to ensure the inclusion of Ohio Certified Prevention Specialists and prevention advocates as discussions continue to ensure effective investment in quality evidence-based prevention strategies. OPAN and its members are experts in the provision of prevention services and look to be a resource as these discussions continue.

Again, OPAN applauds Representatives Manning and West in introducing this critically needed legislation establishing the Ohio Children's Behavioral Health Prevention Network Stakeholder Group focusing on how to make proper investments in prevention services for youth in the State. This bill keeps the best interest of our children in mind while ensuring the General Assembly is a good steward of tax payer dollars by saving the state a substantial amount of money in the future by investing in prevention services now.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written-only testimony on House Bill 12. All questions can be sent to the OPAN co-chairs listed below.

² National Research Council (US) and Institute of Medicine (US) Committee on the Prevention of Mental Disorders and Substance Abuse Among Children, Youth, and Young Adults: Research Advances and Promising Interventions; O'Connell ME, Boat T, Warner KE

³ ISU Report to United Nations Conference Says Drug Prevention Programs Help the Economy, January, 2009

⁴ Miller, T., & Hendrie, D.(2009). Substance abuse prevention dollars and cents: a cost-benefit analysis. DHHS Pub. No. (SMA) 07-4298. Rockville, MD: Center for Substance Abuse Prevention,

⁵ Institute of Medicine. (1994). *Reducing Risks for Mental Disorders: Frontiers for Preventive Intervention Research*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

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Problem Gambling Network of Ohio