

Teresa Lampl, Interim CEO
Testimony Before the House Finance, HHS Subcommittee
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Chairman Romanchuk, Ranking Member West and members of the House Finance, Health and Human Services Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on Governor Mike DeWine's executive budget proposal for state fiscal years 2020-2021. I am Teresa Lampl, Interim CEO of the Ohio Council of Behavioral Health and Family Services Providers (the Ohio Council). The Ohio Council is a statewide trade and advocacy organization representing over 150 private businesses that deliver addiction treatment and prevention, mental health, and family services throughout Ohio, including many in your own house districts.

In House Bill 166, Governor DeWine has provided a clear vision, strong leadership and steadfast commitment to investing in Ohio's future and the health and wellbeing of all Ohioans. We have welcomed this new administration's willingness to listen to stakeholders, share timely data, and recognize the serious challenges facing the state and address them head on.

The members of this subcommittee, and I suspect that all members of the Ohio General Assembly, need no reminder that Ohio faces an unrelenting addiction and mental illness crisis – individuals, families, employers and whole communities are suffering. The resources included in the Governor's executive budget directed toward addressing this public health crisis are a wise investment that will surely yield positive results – some will be immediate, others will not be realized for years down the road.

RecoveryOhio

Governor DeWine created the RecoveryOhio Advisory Council convening a diverse group of Ohioans committed to taking a hard look at the state's various human services systems and putting forth a plan to improve treatment options and supports for those struggling with addiction or mental illness. I am proud to be a member of this Advisory Council and look forward to working collaboratively with policy makers and other stakeholders to help advance the important recommendations outlined in the initial report. In my opinion, the RecoveryOhio Initial Report provides a comprehensive set of policy proposals that address everything from insurance parity, stigma reduction, behavioral health workforce development, and establishment of a full continuum of prevention, treatment and recovery services necessary to help Ohioans access the care they need, when and where they need it.

Full Continuum of Care

The Governor's executive budget effectively responds in numerous ways to the addiction and mental illness public health crisis facing our state, and we are very pleased the Governor is seeking a robust investment in behavioral health services across the continuum of care. The Ohio Council is pleased to see resources directed to expand prevention, treatment and crisis stabilization services in multiple state agencies. We appreciate the General Assembly's investment in recent years and encourage lawmakers to continue building out and supporting a full behavioral health continuum

of care infrastructure. Unfortunately, until recently, Ohio's community mental health and addiction services system was neglected and never truly supported with the appropriate resources necessary to function in the effective manner or rapidly respond to our states growing behavioral health crisis. I am hopeful that with the Governor's vision and the General Assembly's partnership, these significant investments can be made to the system, yielding greater efficiencies and high-quality outcomes.

With respect to key provisions in the executive budget, I would like to highlight a few measures that specifically address Ohio Council priority areas.

Prevention and Kids

The Ohio Council commends the Governor's budget proposals that will expand prevention, screening, evidence-based home visiting services and facilitate greater access to school-based health and behavioral health services, including critically important wrap around services to support kids be better prepared to learn. We also enthusiastically applaud the Department of Medicaid's initiatives that will help new moms in recovery bond and connect with their babies, promote telehealth services in schools and expand coverage for services for children on the autism spectrum. The investments in Ohio's child welfare system are necessary to help children and families stabilize and access services to reduce trauma and promote resilience. As I have stated many times before, today's children are tomorrow's adults, parents, community leaders, workforce and the key to our state's economic success.

Parity Education and Enforcement

The Ohio Council is pleased to see resources in HB 166 for the Ohio Department of Insurance's efforts to raise awareness and conduct greater regulatory enforcement of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008. More must be done to share information and resources to help Ohioans and employers better understand their rights and responsibilities under the law. And Parity enforcement can be a tool to help expand treatment capacity and services while also ensuring resources are appropriately and efficiently allocated within the public and private health insurance markets.

Workforce

There is a severe workforce shortage in the community behavioral health system. To meet the increased demand for such services, Ohio must invest in and support strategies to grow the workforce, develop talented professionals, and retain their services in the community behavioral health system. We support the resources within the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services' (MHAS) budget directed toward workforce recruitment, training and retention. And we appreciate the Ohio Department of Health's (ODH) proposals to expand the drug treatment workforce by offering loan repayment assistance. There is no doubt, the Governor's proposed investments in services and supports must be paired with a comprehensive strategy to ensure that there is an adequate workforce ready and able to deliver these essential services.

Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD)

The Ohio Council has a number of members that offer supported employment and job-training services as part of their mental health and addiction treatment program. They support these recovery services through various funding sources, including reimbursement from OOD's vocational rehabilitation program. We appreciate the efforts of OOD to engage stakeholders in recent VR Fee

Schedule discussions and Director Miller's willingness to partner with the provider community. However, given the growing need for employment services and OOD's strong federal matching rate, we are concerned that OOD is not accessing all the federal funds available to Ohio and bringing them to bear in the system. Further, we assert that any expansion of service capacity should primarily be done by making greater and more efficient use of the community provider networks and collaborations rather than OOD hiring more staff. OOD would benefit from an independent review of its programs and financial management.

Medicaid Initiatives: SUD Waiver/BHCC/Dyad Care

The Ohio Council has been a collaborative partner with the Ohio Department of Medicaid on its policy initiatives to develop a 1115 Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Waiver and design a robust Behavioral Health Care Coordination (BHCC) model aimed at supporting Ohioans with intensive and often complicated conditions. The 1115 SUD Waiver is needed for Ohio to continue federal financial participation for critically important substance use disorder treatment services and to expand care coordination under the BHCC model to complex populations that all too often are not provided the services necessary to match their unique needs. The Waiver also offers the opportunity to enhance and strengthen services for pregnant women with opioid use disorder and their babies, including some suffering with neonatal abstinence syndrome or NAS. Specifically, this 1115 SUD waiver package of services will improve care management, enhance clinical consistency, measure outcomes, and track performance. We strongly support the executive budget's investments directed toward the intertwined programs proposed in the 1115 SUD Waiver.

Behavioral Health Redesign

I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to offer brief comments with respect to the challenges imposed by behavioral health (BH) redesign. All the critical investments intended to curb the opioid crisis, strengthen mental health services and expand treatment capacity in this state budget could be frustrated without significant course correction. As you know, BH Redesign was initiated and driven by the past administration. And while the original goals were laudable, the execution has put tremendous strain on the community behavioral health services system. It is evident that the initiative was poorly designed, rushed in its implementation and poorly managed. The implementation process, including the transition to managed care lacked transparency and accountability. In short, community mental health and addiction treatment providers are struggling to get reimbursed timely and accurately by the Medicaid managed care plans. And this is causing some of the providers in your districts to lay off staff, trim programs and decrease services to Ohioans in need. All of this should have been and could have been avoided if the past administration would have listened to stakeholders.

Thankfully, Governor DeWine has made listening to stakeholders and communities a characteristic of his administration and he has made key appointments in critical agencies that are working deliberately and urgently to fix BH Redesign. Both Directors Criss and Corcoran have pledged their best and urgent efforts to address the challenges associated with BH Redesign and the transition to managed care. Stabilization is understood to require urgent and bold actions. The Ohio Council sincerely appreciates this commitment and we in turn, offer our collaboration, resources and best efforts to help turn this troublesome issue turn-around. The individuals and families of Ohio in need of mental health and addiction treatment services deserve nothing less.

Thank you for your time and consideration today. I am happy to answer any questions.