



Ohio Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions Committee

Written Testimony on SB 254

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Chairman Hackett, Vice-Chair Hottinger, Ranking Member Craig, and members of the Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions Committee, thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony on Senate Bill 254. My name is Liz Henrich and I am the Associate CEO of the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities. We represent Ohio's Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Boards.

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 254. Our membership supports efforts to ensure that mental health and addiction parity regulations are effectively implemented and well understood by individuals, practitioners, and payers to ensure that Ohioans are able to access the mental health and addiction service benefits provided by their insurers. Specifically, we are supportive of this bill's efforts to:

- Update and align Ohio law to be consistent with the federal Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act;
- Help to raise awareness of individuals, families, and employers about their rights under the Parity law and educate the public on health insurance resources generally;
- Facilitate greater implementation of the Parity law, including consumer protections;
- Hold health insurance plans accountable by requiring them to demonstrate compliance with the Parity law; and
- Require executive agencies to perform oversight over health insurance plans and publicly report findings.

Updating and aligning the parity laws will further our efforts to help individuals access the treatment services they need using the healthcare coverage they currently have. That will allow Ohio's ADAMH Board, as local public payers, to further support necessary prevention and recovery support services. In order to do this, it is critical that we put in place an effective and publicly accessible reporting system for parity compliance information.

OACBHA is a member of the Parity@10 Coalition, a broad and diverse group of policy and advocacy organizations that has been working together to identify challenges related to the current parity laws and propose solutions. Collectively, we look forward to continuing to work to ensure that Ohioans have access to mental health and addiction services and supports when and where they need them.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. Should you have any questions, please contact me at (614)224-1111 or ehenrich@oacbha.org.