



Chairperson Hackett, Vice Chair Hottinger, Ranking Member Craig and members of the Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions Committee:

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Alvis - Columbus, Dayton,  
Chillicothe

Community Assessment &  
Treatment Services,  
Inc. - Cleveland

Community Corrections  
Association, Inc - Youngstown

Community Correctional  
Center,  
Talbert House -Lebanon

Community Restoration  
Centers of Stark County, Inc.  
- Canton

Community Transition Center  
- Lancaster

CROSSWAEH CBCF, Oriana  
House, Inc. - Tiffin

Judge Nancy R. McDonnell  
CBCF, Oriana House, Inc. -  
Cleveland

Mahoning County CBCF,  
Community Corrections  
Association, Inc. -  
Youngstown

Ohio Link Corrections &  
Treatment, Inc. - Lima &  
Toledo

Oriana House, Inc. - Akron,  
Cleveland, Marietta,  
Sandusky

Summit County CBCF Oriana  
House, Inc. - Akron

Please accept this written testimony from the Ohio Community Corrections Association (OCCA) in support of SB 254. The Ohio Community Corrections Association (OCCA) represents 10 Non-Profit Community Corrections Agencies that provide residential reentry treatment services for thousands of individuals at a time.

OCCA's member agencies provide research-based programs and services that have been proven to reduce recidivism. Clients are able to work and/or attend school while participating in treatment services, gathering resources and learning skills for a successful, crime-free life.

The State of Ohio built the most progressive community corrections model in the United States due to the leadership of the House and Senate, our Governors, and the leadership at the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections. This investment in evidence based practices provides cost effective and efficient criminal justice sanctions.

Both OCCA agencies and the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction use the Ohio Risk Assessment System (ORAS), a dynamic risk/needs assessment system developed by researchers at the University of Cincinnati and specifically designed for Ohio. ORAS is used to generate case plans that identify and prioritize individual offender needs and specific treatment domains. This leads to a more efficient allocation of supervision and treatment resources.

OCCA represents 39 nonprofit residential reentry treatment facilities, also called halfway houses, and community based correctional facilities (CBCFs). There are 18 CBCFs in Ohio, OCCA represents 5. OCCA is also a member of the Ohio Parity at Ten Coalition, a broad and diverse group of advocacy and policy organizations who helped to draft and propose SB 254 and its companion, HB 432.

OCCA believes that the time is right for this body to update and align Ohio law with the federal Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA) of 2008. In order to accomplish this, SB 254 requires the Superintendent of Insurance to implement and enforce the MHPAEA by requiring compliance by the health plans. The Superintendent is also charged with evaluating all consumer and provider complaints and issuing a compliance report. This reporting will help consumers and the public better understand their rights and responsibilities under the MHPAEA.

In order to achieve parity, the bill specifically prohibits treatment limitations (quantitative and non-quantitative) that are only applied to behavioral health benefits and not to physical health benefits. Compliance is ensured through provisions requiring health plans to analyze benefit coverages and submit a report to the superintendent of insurance demonstrating parity.

OCCA believes that SB 254 makes important strides with the Medicaid population, by specifically applying MHPAEA to the Ohio Medicaid program. Under the provisions of the bill, the Director of Ohio Medicaid will issue a parity compliance report and ensure that the Medicaid managed care plans are in compliance. This is especially important to OCCA, as many of our clients are Medicaid eligible.

SB 254 is consistent with Governor DeWine's RecoveryOhio Report which specifically recommends that Ohio pursue "alignment with the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act." OCCA, as a party of the Parity at Ten Coalition, believes that SB 254 will benefit all Ohioans by encouraging greater transparency and accountability from the health plans and the State. We believe that this will ultimately result in expanded access to mental health and addiction treatment services for Ohioans.

Thank you for consideration of OCCA's strong support of SB 254.