

**Proponent Testimony
SB 332
House Finance Committee
December 1, 2016**

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Ryan, Ranking Member Driehaus, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 332. My name is Kelly Smith and I am the State Program & Policy Director for the Mental Health & Addiction Advocacy Coalition (MHAC).

We are a statewide coalition made up of over 100 organizations where behavioral health issues intersect with those they serve. The MHAC's members exemplify the diversity of community organizations that have a common interest in behavioral health, including: the faith-based community; courts; hospitals; behavioral health providers; and managed care organizations. The MHAC strives to increase awareness of behavioral health issues and advance public policies that positively impact Ohioans affected by mental illness and addiction disorders.

Senate Bill 332 provides for the implementation of many of the recommendations of the Commission on Infant Mortality released earlier this year. These recommendations fall into the areas of: improving data collection and sharing; enhancing current interventions; restructuring health systems for improved outcomes; and addressing social determinants of health for pregnant and at-risk women. We applaud the work of Senators Jones and Tavares for the thoughtful provisions to address infant mortality in our state with birth spacing, safe sleep, establishing community hubs, addressing housing for pregnant women, and streamlining home visiting programs.

We are supportive of the work being done that requires the Ohio Department of Health to create a population-based questionnaire designed to examine maternal behaviors related to pregnancy similar to the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) questionnaire that was recently discontinued. A similar questionnaire will be helpful in bringing awareness to expecting mothers about mental health and addiction disorders during pregnancy.

Additionally, the legislation was amended to include provisions from HB 421 that allows trained pharmacists to administer long acting injections such as opioid antagonists and antipsychotics. This will provide more access to mental health and substance use disorder treatment services. With this bill, many more individuals will be able to receive care through their pharmacist. Long-acting injections will also produce a better success rate of medication adherence that will keep individuals in recovery. The legislation also requires the prescribing physician to be notified by the pharmacist of a patient's visit. This will guarantee individuals are receiving Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) along with counseling and other services that are needed in the recovery process.

By allowing more professionals to administer medications, this will ensure more people have access to care while reducing barriers to treatment such as workforce shortages, transportation issues, and medication adherence. The MHAC would like to thank the bill sponsors and Representative LaTourette for their work on this important legislation that will improve the health and wellness of women and babies as well as those with mental illness and addiction disorders in our state.

Offices

2600 Victory Parkway | Cincinnati, OH 45206 | 513.751.7747

4500 Euclid Avenue | Cleveland, OH 44103 | 216.432.7262

➤ 101 E. Town Street | Suite 520 | Columbus, OH 43215 | 614.224.7018

mhaadvocacy.org