

Testimony of Scott Sylak
Health & Human Services Subcommittee of House Finance
March 10, 2015

Good Afternoon Chairman Sprague, Ranking Member Sykes and members of the Health & Human Services Subcommittee of the House Finance Committee. My name is Scott Sylak, and I am the Executive Director of the Mental Health and Recovery Services Board of Lucas County. I am here to testify regarding H.B. 64 on behalf of the 26,000 Lucas County residents who receive services within our system of care, as well as for the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities.

Let me start out by saying thank you for your previous efforts related to improving access to necessary and lifesaving mental health and addiction services. The expansion of Medicaid and increases to the OMHAS FY 14/15 507 line item of \$20.1 million and the 421 line item of \$10 million has had profoundly positive effects on our local system. I would urge you to maintain these gains in State Fiscal years 16 and 17 as the savings realized by our local communities via Medicaid expansion is unlikely sufficient to meet the addiction and mental health treatment and community support needs of our state's population.

Locally, we are calculating our savings due to Medicaid expansion at \$2.2 million dollars annually. Please recognize that this amount is half the amount calculated by OMHAS. We have come to this conclusion by using a straightforward analysis that compares our "high water" mark for treatment

expenses of nearly \$7 million dollars in FY 2012 to our projected actual expenses for treatment this year of \$4.8 million. I will resist the temptation to speculate as to why the difference in estimates, and simply state that I share Director Plouck's vision that these savings must be reinvested in our communities effectively as this is truly a "once in a generation" opportunity.

Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Boards throughout the state have recognized this opportunity since day one. Utilizing the "Recovery is Beautiful" blueprint, Boards are developing recovery oriented systems of care that focus on the individual's and families' need for recovery services, building on their strengths, and incorporating a coordinated and collaborative approach across the community. Guiding principles to this work include focusing on client and family needs for self-directed care, ensuring timely access to care, promoting healthy, safe and drug-free communities, prioritizing accountable and outcome-driven financing, and locally managing these systems of care.

Over the last several years, Lucas County has benefited from increased local and state investments and is experiencing what might be considered a renaissance of sorts. Fueled equally by changing environmental factors at the state and federal level, an 18 member Board of Trustees who share the values espoused by the Recovery is Beautiful Blueprint, a collective of stakeholders who value collaboration and are committed to breaking down barriers, and the availability of funds, Lucas County's behavioral health system is evolving. The increase in local levy and

state Hot Spot funding received in FY 13, coupled with the additional 507 funds and modest Medicaid Expansion savings realized in FY 14 made possible a foundation of investments that will carry through to FY 16 despite receiving nearly \$1.8 million fewer 507 dollars from the state in FY 15. It was understood that savings due to Medicaid expansion “ramp up” would be used to sustain these efforts, rendering additional programs funded by Medicaid savings unlikely. As you are aware, we cannot spend that savings twice.

Our efforts are consistent with the State’s priorities; including efforts to reduce hospitalization and crisis, increasing housing opportunities for the mentally ill and addicted, increased access to medication assisted therapies and the development of strategies that reduce the number of mentally ill and addicted involved in our criminal justice system. And while we are proud of all our advancements, I would like to highlight some of our activities related to the criminal justice system. These include;

- Ensuring that case management, linkage services and psychotropic medications are available to inmates upon release from state prison and local jails.
- Expanded Family Drug Court capacity by 100%.
- Provided funds to the Urban Minority Alcohol and Drug Abuse Project and the Treatment Accountability for Safer Communities Program to provide case management and group services after they received cuts in their SAPT funding.

- Recently established a Vivitrol Program in collaboration with A Renewed Mind and the Lucas County Corrections Center where the first Vivitrol shot is provided while the inmate is still in jail.
- Collaborating with Zepf Center, the Ohio Attorney General's Office, and the Lucas County Commissioners to develop 70 Recovery Housing beds dedicated to victims of Opiate and Heroin overdoses who are referred through the Sheriff's Addiction Resource Unit, the Prosecutor's Office or the local court systems.
- Doubled access to Crisis Intervention Team Training to Law Enforcement Officers to improve officer and consumer safety while improving opportunities for diversion.
- Collaborated with over 50 area professional, including Bud Hite, Director of the Correctional Treatment Facility to initiate the Sequential Intercept Mapping process in Lucas County.

Mr. Hite will provide additional detail regarding this effort, its contributions to reforming our criminal justice system and the value of systems collaboration. However, before Mr. Hite's comments, I would like to state that these initiatives are funded in part by 507 and 421 funds, I would ask you to preserve these resources in FY 16 and 17.

Thank you and I will be available after Mr. Hite's comments to answer any questions.