



May 23, 2017

RE: Senate Finance General Government & Agency Review Subcommittee
Testimony on H.B. 49

Chairman Jordan, Ranking Member O'Brien and members of the Senate Finance Subcommittee on Government & Agency Review, thank you for allowing me to testify today regarding the Targeted Community Alternatives to Prison (TCAP) program as proposed by Governor Kasich.

My name is Dustin Mets and I am the CEO of CompDrug, a non-profit with its main offices here in Columbus. We employ over 140 mostly licensed or credentialed individuals including doctors, nurses, social workers, clinicians and preventionists. CompDrug has been on the front line of the opiate epidemic in Central Ohio since the early 70s and we are known primarily for our outpatient addiction and mental health services focused on individuals dealing with Opiate Addiction.

In addition to our work in the community, we partner with OMHAS and ODRC to operate six Therapeutic Communities inside ODRC prisons across the state. We have operated the Tapestry Program at the Ohio Reformatory for Women in Marysville for over 25 years. The aim of these Therapeutic Communities is to provide effective treatment to inmates during their incarceration which directly reduces recidivism and strengthens the communities into which these citizens return.

We have a unique experience having bridged the gap between providing services to those that are incarcerated and those in the community. Both are important, both have advantages and negatives, but for low-level, non-violent offenders, judges, probation staff, law enforcement and community providers can provide a level of hope and rehabilitation that isn't possible in prison.

This is why we strongly support Governor Kasich and Director Mohr's proposed expansion of the TCAP program currently being piloted in eight (8) counties. The proposed additional \$19 million in FY 18 and an additional \$39 million in FY 19 would provide for the supervision, treatment and sanction of the offenders locally, without the use of a prison sanction.

Research has consistently shown that community-based drug abuse treatment can reduce drug use and drug-related criminal behavior.... [T]reatment [is] up to 1.8 times better in reducing drug use than the usual alternatives. In a meta-analysis of 66 incarceration-based treatment evaluations, therapeutic community and counseling approaches were respectively 1.4 and 1.5 times more likely to reduce reoffending. Drug courts combine judicial supervision with drug treatment as an alternative to incarceration; their graduates have rearrest rates about half those of matched comparison samples and much lower than those of drug court dropouts. Individuals who participated in prison-based treatment followed by a community-based

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program post-incarceration were 7 times more likely to be drug free and 3 times less likely to be arrested for criminal behavior than those not receiving treatment.

Treating Drug Abuse and Addiction in the Criminal Justice System: Improving Public Health and Safety, Redonna K. Chandler, PhD, Bennett W. Fletcher, PhD, and Nora D. Volkow, MD, JAMA. 2009 Jan 14; 301(2): 183–190.

Providing local, community treatment for low-level offenders that is more effective and less costly for taxpayers. It supports Ohio's Justice Reinvestment Initiatives goals to reduce corrections costs and recidivism. Further, TCAP will help reduce Ohio's prison population and density. At the same time, it is also what is best for the long term treatment outcome of the offender. Simply stated, TCAP ensures that more people receive the supervision and essential treatment they need in a more effective and less costly setting than prison.

As the opioid epidemic continues to ravage a generation of Ohioans, we must empower our communities with multiple tools in order to treat those facing addiction. First responders, judges, prosecutors see the impact of this opioid epidemic on a daily basis. TCAP is a creative yet pragmatic program that can provide communities with the tools necessary to save lives and restore families, all while being fiscally responsible.

Continued Medicaid Expansion is another tool that needs to stay in the toolbox in the fight against opiate epidemic. Treatment is the cheaper option across all systems. Further, the costs of untreated addiction are borne by other systems such as Criminal Justice, Child Welfare, and Fire/EMS/Police. Most individuals having to deal with the chronic disease of addiction desperately want to be contributing members of society. Many have co-occurring mental health and physical health issues. We must never forget that these individuals are ill needing to get well, not bad needing to be good. Medicaid provides the care necessary for many of these individuals to get well. Addiction treatment saves money from day one, all while doing what is necessary to save a life.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in support of the TCAP program and I will be happy to take any questions.

A. Dustin Mets, CEO