



Ohio Grandparents/Kinship Coalition  
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**Ohio House of Representatives Health Committee  
House Bill 14 – Proponent Testimony  
May 28, 2019**

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Chairman Merrin, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Boyd, and members of the Ohio House Health Committee: my name is Barbara Turpin and I am the Co-Secretary for the Ohio Grandparent Kinship Coalition (OGKC), the statewide Ohio non-profit organization whose mission is to advocate for the well-being of thousands of kinship families in Ohio. More than 100,000 grandparents are raising 120,000 grandchildren in Ohio. This does not include the many other relatives and non-family members caring for children whose parents cannot or will not provide care. I have been a Licensed Social Worker for over 30 years and have worked in the fields of juvenile justice, child welfare and kinship care. I have also been a member of OGKC for over 30 years.

I had the responsibility for implementing the first statewide kinship navigator program in the late '90's while at the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. This program is recognized as a national model and eventually 77 of Ohio's counties provided help to kinship caregivers through their navigator programs. As a result of the loss state funding, there are currently less than a handful of navigator programs operating successfully in Ohio. Today, the devastating effects of the opioid crisis have created an even greater need for kinship families to offer a stable home and care for those children affected. When this happens, many times in an emergency, families are overwhelmed and need help and support to access the most basic information in order to minimize the stress and uncertainty of the situation. Navigators help to fill this void by providing information and referral about financial and medical assistance, educational services, counseling, clothing and food banks, and many other resources.

OGKC commends Chairman Merrin, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Boyd and members of the Ohio House Health Committee for recognizing that H.B. 14 is a means for caregivers to access the support and resources they need.

Sincerely and Respectfully Submitted,

Barbara Turpin, LSW  
Co-Secretary, Ohio Grandparent Kinship Coalition