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# Prevention Action Alliance

Lifetime Prevention | Lifetime Wellness

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## Ohio Senate Education Committee Prevention Action Alliance December 3, 2019

Good Morning, Chairman Lehner, Vice Chairman Brenner, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Education Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony as a proponent in consideration of Senate Bill 121 (“SB 121”), a bill that will require the State Board of Education to create health education standards for k-12 schools. My name is Marcie Seidel, and I am the Executive Director of Prevention Action Alliance (PAA). PAA is a 32-year-old statewide nonprofit based in Columbus, Ohio. We are dedicated to leading healthy communities in the prevention of substance misuse and the promotion of mental health wellness. PAA offers a wealth of resources, training services, grants, and advocacy opportunities for those who are active in the prevention and mental health fields.

We in prevention field have been extremely pleased with the work this General Assembly has done so far regarding the health of Ohio’s children. The \$675 million in student wellness and success funding and the \$36 million in prevention funding was not only a bold and necessary step in the right direction, but it also showed that the General Assembly truly cares about Ohio’s youth. However, with Ohio still being the only state in the country without health education standards, work still needs to be done.

Healthy communities are built from a foundation of resilient youth, and resiliency in youth is developed from health education. Therefore, youth are the foundation of all that we do within the prevention field. With more than half of all mental health disorders appearing prior to the age of 14 health education standard are critical for reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors in communities and schools.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, data shows that evidenced-based programs that target skill building and positive decision making among school age youth have a return on investment of up to \$17.25 for every dollar spent<sup>2</sup>, demonstrating the financial value in educating and supporting our school age youth.

In order to prevent ongoing issues related to substance misuse and untreated mental illness the strengthening of resources for our children is key. Sustained messaging is essential in promoting

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<sup>1</sup> Kessler, R.C., et al. (2005). Prevalence, Severity, and Comorbidity of 12-Month DSM-IV Disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 62(6), 593–602. From <http://archpsyc.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=208671>

<sup>2</sup> Miller, T., & Hendrie, D.(2009). Substance abuse prevention dollars and cents: a cost-benefit analysis. DHHS Pub. No. (SMA) 07-4298. Rockville, MD: Center for Substance Abuse Prevention,

healthy choices and health education standards are an important method of delivering those messages so that Ohioans can be supported throughout the lifespan.<sup>3</sup>

Thank you once again for giving me the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 121, and I am happy to answer any questions that the committee may have.

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<sup>3</sup> (US Surgeon General's Report, 2016).