**OHIO SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**TESTIMONY OF JOHN STEINBRUN ON BEHALF OF**

**COLONIAL / NEW SEASON OF OHIO**

**IN SUPPORT OF SUB. H.B. 166**

**MAY 28, 2019**

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chairman Burke, Ranking Member Sykes and members of the Senate Finance Committee. I am John Steinbrun, Chief Executive Officer of New Season of Ohio, a subsidiary of Colonial Management Group, L.P., and we support the passage of Amended Substitute House Bill 166, and particularly Governor DeWine’s budget proposals contained within the budget of the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

New Season of Ohio is a counseling company. We are part of a network of 76 private outpatient substance abuse treatment clinics in 22 states that have been successfully treating opiate dependence since 1986. Our parent company is headquartered in Orlando, Florida. We, like other federally licensed Opioid Treatment Programs, offer comprehensive care that the National Institutes of Health say is the most effective means of treating Opioid Use Disorder. Of patients who have been in treatment at New Season for over one year, 90% are testing negative for all illicit opioids, and 73% are employed.

We are a member of the Medication Assisted Treatment Leadership Council. This includes nearly 400 OTP clinics across 41 states; we provide comprehensive treatment to patients, we are highly regulated by State and Federal governments, and we have very low drug diversion rates. The treatment in MAT is the counseling. Our counseling is aimed at changing the behaviors and conditions that lead to drug use.

Governor DeWine, through his budget proposal, clearly recognizes the need to address Ohio’s opioid crisis by directing the resources necessary to make a significant impact in the lives of thousands of people who are in great need of recovery assistance. Sadly, Ohio had the second highest rate of drug overdose deaths involving opioids in the United States in 2017, with 4,293 reported deaths—a rate of 39.2 deaths per 100,000 persons, compared to the average national rate of 14.6 deaths per 100,000 persons according to data from the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Sadly, even with treatment programs available, the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration cites a variety of reasons for why many in this population are not seeking treatment. In a 2017 survey, 39.7% of those not seeking drug treatment said they were not ready to stop using opioids. Additionally, 30.3% said they did not have health coverage and could not afford the cost of drug treatment. There were 20.5% of respondents who said that seeking treatment might have a negative effect on their job; 17.2% said that seeking treatment might cause their neighbors and community to have a negative opinion of them; 10.9% said they did not know where to get treatment; and finally, 9% said they could not find a program that offered the type of treatment that was desired. With this budget, the State of Ohio has a tremendous opportunity to address the second greatest barrier to care: lack of financial resources. *(I’ve attached to my written testimony a copy of my source document for your perusal as well.)*

House Bill 166, recently outlined in testimony by Director Lori Criss, would support statewide behavioral health treatment capacity by directing over $15 million over the biennium to meet the critical need for workforce demand to assist in this important industry with a growing demand for these services. This funding would help address an unprecedented need for counseling services by assisting in the following ways:

* Support recruiting, training, and retaining workforce in the behavioral health industry by directing $8 million for these efforts to help grow and retain this critical workforce.
* Perform a thorough evaluation of the state’s health treatment capacity with a one-time investment of $100,000. This evaluation will help inform strategic planning to address gaps in the treatment continuum caused by Ohio’s behavioral health shortage.
* Streamline and strengthen the state’s regulatory system by directing $1.5 million per year toward improving Ohio’s licensing and certification processes of community-based addiction and mental health treatment providers, including Adult Care Facilities to ensure safe treatment environments for the public, while allowing more providers to move through the certification process both thoroughly and expeditiously.

Collectively, these proposals will help the state address a public health crisis and help ensure a brighter future for the citizens of this state. New Season of Ohio appreciates the Governor’s commitment to addressing these problems with these increased levels of funding, as well as the anticipated work of RecoveryOhio. With the passage of Am.Sub. H.B. 166, Director Criss and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction will have the resources they need to help those impacted by the opioid crisis recover and get jobs and stable housing and the level of investment that has been proposed will go a long way to address these challenges.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on Sub. H.B. 166.