



Ohio
Prevention
Advocacy
Network

**Ohio Senate Finance Committee
Ohio Prevention Advocacy Network
6.17.2019**

Good morning, Chairman Dolan, Vice Chairman Burke, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Senate Finance Committee. My name is Mary Wolff and I am a member of the Ohio Prevention Advocacy Network (OPAN). OPAN is a coalition of prevention professionals and volunteers striving to establish safe, healthy and stable communities by elevating the voices of Ohio's prevention experts. I come before you today, concerned and saddened by the most recent version of the budget that was released last week. Based on this most recent version of the budget the Ohio Prevention Advocacy Network (OPAN) has no choice but to testify as an opponent, as the 36 million dollars previously appropriated for prevention initiatives in our state's proposed budget is now gone.

In our last testimony before this committee, we applauded Governor DeWine for his commitment to providing our children with access to resources that support healthy development in their homes, schools, and communities. Additionally, we were very pleased to see that the House supported that message through their version of the budget as those resources would not only save lives, but they would also save Ohioans' money. Research shows that each dollar spent on evidence-based substance misuse prevention programs produces nearly a \$10 return.¹ 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.²

As Ohio communities continue to be impacted by addiction crises and mental health issues, we in the prevention field cannot understand why the Senate would completely remove funding for K-12 prevention efforts and stigma reduction in the sub bill. With more than half of all mental health disorders appearing prior to the age of 14, it is necessary to focus prevention services towards youth with the aim of reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors in communities and schools.³ Appropriate prevention funding in schools not only impacts the child, but it impacts their families and the entire community at large.

¹ ISU Report to United Nations Conference Says Drug Prevention Programs Help the Economy, January, 2009

² 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,

³ 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>

We must recognize prevention as an essential part of the continuum of care and invest in critical prevention services, so we can effectively address and prevent the behavioral health problems we today.⁴ Returning the funding for K-12 prevention education initiatives and multi-media prevention, treatment, and stigma reduction campaigns is not only good health policy, but it is good fiscal policy. Ohio ranks fifth in the nation in opiate abuse health care costs, totaling over 1.07 billion dollars.⁵ The most recent data from the Department of Health estimates that the opioid crisis cost each Ohio citizen \$3,385 in healthcare and criminal justice spending.⁶

We need to provide our citizens with the tools and support necessary to reduce their risk of experiencing substance use or mental health disorders, and that is what prevention does.

The budget as it stands currently is a massive step back from all the progress and promise the previous version of the budget contained and sends the state's behavioral health field a message that the Senate does not value the work that they do.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony as an opponent in consideration of Sub HB 166. and I am happy to answer any questions that the committee may have.

⁴ Institute of Medicine. (1994). Reducing Risks for Mental Disorders: Frontiers for Preventive Intervention Research. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

⁵ 1 Matrix Global Advisors, LLC, Health Care Costs from Opioid Abuse: A State by State Analysis; April, 2015

⁶ Ohio Department of Health, 2017 Ohio Drug Overdose Data: General Findings, 2017.

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