
Prevention Action Alliance

Lifetime Prevention | Lifetime Wellness

Ohio Senate Finance Committee Prevention Action Alliance

6.17.2019

Good morning, Chairman Dolan, Vice Chairman Burke, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Senate Finance Committee. My name is Marcie Seidel and I am the Executive Director of Prevention Action Alliance (PAA). PAA is a 30-year-old statewide nonprofit and certified Prevention Partner with the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS). Based in Columbus, Ohio, we are dedicated to leading healthy communities in the prevention of alcohol, tobacco, and other substance misuse as well as the promotion of mental health wellness. PAA offers a wealth of resources, training services, and opportunities for those who are active in the prevention and mental health fields.

Due to the recent changes in the budget introduced last week, I am testifying today as an opponent to Substitute House Bill 166 and ask that you consider restoring the funding for K-12 prevention education initiatives and statewide multi-media prevention, treatment, and stigma reduction campaigns back into the budget. In a state where our communities continue to be impacted by addiction crises and mental health issues we are confused by the recent removal of the 36 million dollars of prevention funding from the budget.

We at Prevention Action Alliance strongly encourage the restoration of the 36 million because it is good health policy, good fiscal policy and will help fill in the gaps that currently exist. Ohio ranks fifth in the nation in opiate abuse health care costs, totaling over 1.07 billion dollars¹, and yet prevention receives no GRF dollars. Each dollar spent on evidence-based substance misuse prevention programs produces nearly a \$10 return², while 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.³ Yet this committee has removed an astounding amount of prevention funding from the budget.

Prevention is an essential part of the continuum of care that we must value if we want to strengthen our communities. The state must invest in critical prevention services and not just

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

² ISU Report to United Nations Conference Says Drug Prevention Programs Help the Economy, January 2009

³ 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,

rely on community dollars coming from the federal government which are variable, not guaranteed, and are not enough.

Our state has a history of reacting to crises as opposed to stopping it before it starts. If we are to look to a bright future, we must be proactive, not reactive. This is where prevention comes in, helping people develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to make good choices and promote positive behaviors. It is scientifically based, battle tested, and has been proven to work through a plethora of research. The prevention strategies we see today have taken an 180 degree, evidenced based turn from its beginnings as just say no and the DARE program. It seeks to reduce the risk factors in a child's life and build the protective factors that makes them resilient. This is what our children need and deserve.

In closing I would like to leave you with this. *Greater is the leader who plans for a future that he may never see than one who plans lesser goals for immediate accolades."* Anonymous

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.