



14 April 2021

Dustin Holfinger  
 American Heart Association  
 Ohio House Finance Committee  
 HB 110 – Proponent Testimony

Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Minority Member Crawley, and members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the American Heart Association regarding substitute HB 110 - the State Operating Budget.

The AHA, as a non-profit organization that funds cardiovascular medical research, educates consumers on healthy living, and fosters appropriate cardiac care in an effort to reduce disability and deaths caused by cardiovascular disease and stroke, we appreciate the work this Chamber has put forward in this substitute bill to advance our collective mission - to build a healthier Ohio. That process began with all of us, as organizations, individuals, and elected officials, taking a moment to consider increasing funding for programs that will help Ohioans that have been affected the most by the economic downturn due to the pandemic and the state's business closures.

While we believe that there is still an opportunity to build on the progress the State has made to prevent and treat these deadly conditions and to address our food insecurity concerns in every corner of the state, we also understand the fiscal constraints of a 2-year operating budget and support the changes this Committee has made.

However, as you continue your deliberations, we would ask that you reconsider the following funding opportunity:

- **Ohio's Produce Prescription Program (PRx)** - works to help residents increase access to healthy food in low-resource neighborhoods; and supports fruit and vegetable access for low-income pregnant women to support healthy birth outcomes and reduce infant mortality rates.
  - o Earmarked program within the "Infant Vitality" line-item (440474).
  - o "Infant Vitality" funded at \$17,637,292 in FY 2022 (+45.3%) and \$12,137,292 in FY 2023 (-31.2%)
  - o The AHA has joined with Produce Perks and other health organizations to advocate for a 100% increase in PRx Program funding.
  - o Previously funded amount: \$175,000/year.
  - o Requested amount: \$350,000/year.

In addition, the AHA appreciates and applauds your dedication to the following provisions:

- **Bottle Filling Stations for Ohio new-build schools**
  - o Passed as a part of SB 259 from the last General Assembly, we are asking for additional requirements for these products that mirror the current drinking fountain requirement.
  - o Drinking fountain access is denied across the state and most schools are installing bottle filling stations to modernize their facilities.

- Policy would only affect new-builds and major renovation projects – no retroactivity.
  - Our request for changes included:
    - At least 1 bottle filling station per 100 students
    - At least 1 bottle filling station on each floor of the building
    - At least 1 bottle filling station in all school food service areas
    - At least 1 bottle filling station near gymnasiums.
  - Thank you for including these technical changes in sub-HB 110.
- **Tobacco Use Prevention Fund**
- The Governor proposed an increase in the “Tobacco Use Prevention Fund” line item (440656) of \$2.5M in each fiscal year.
  - Funding total: \$14.5 million in each FY (+20.8% increase)
  - The program promotes healthy outcomes in Ohioans by limiting the effects of tobacco and tobacco smoke by taking steps to lower smoking rates.
  - Major components of the program include Prevention, Cessation, Enforcement and Data and Statistics.
  - Just a 1% decline in Ohio smokers will mean 91,000 less smokers and could save up to \$75M over 5 years through a reduction in smoking-related medical costs.
  - Ohio – 20.5% smoking rate. US average – 14%
  - We thank the House for retaining this funding level.

We thank you for this opportunity and if any additional information is required as you consider these requests, please do not hesitate to reach out for additional information or further discussion.



Dustin A. Holfinger  
State Government Relations Director,  
American Heart Association