



13 May 2021

Dustin Holfinger
 American Heart Association
 Ohio Senate Finance Committee
 Sub. HB 110 – Proponent Testimony

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Minority Member Sykes, and members of the Senate 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 to reduce disability and deaths caused by cardiovascular disease and stroke, appreciates the work that the House has put forward in this substitute bill to advance our collective mission - to build a healthier Ohio – and we are hoping to continue to build upon that work with the Senate. That process continues with all of us, as organizations, individuals, and elected officials, taking a moment to consider where we can responsibly increase 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.

However, as you continue your deliberations, we would ask that you consider building upon the following funding opportunities:

- **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 House-funded amount: \$0/year
 - o Previously funded amount: \$175,000/year.
 - o **Requested amount: \$350,000/year.**
- **Produce Perks (SNAP Double Up Program)**
 - o Any amount spent with SNAP/EBT or P-EBT, up to \$25, will be matched \$1-for-\$1. Produce Perks matching dollars are spent only on fruits and vegetables.
 - o Has historically been an earmarked program via the TANF Block Grant.
 - o TANF Block Grant funded at \$961,819,158 in FY 2022 (+1.8%) and 1,025,474,447 in FY 2023 (+6.6%).

- Currently, Produce Perks operates in 33 of the 88 counties, leaving many citizens in rural counties without this incentive.
- This increase would allow Produce Perks to expand its operations into 20% more counties.
- House-funded amount: \$250,000/year.
- **Requested amount: \$500,000/year.**

In addition, the AHA respectfully requests that this body retain the following provisions:

- **Bottle Filling Stations for Ohio new-build schools**
 - Passed as a part of SB 259 from the last General Assembly, these additional requirements for bottle filling station placement mirror the current drinking fountain requirement.
 - Drinking fountain access has routinely been 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.
 - **Please retain 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%
 - **Please retain this increased 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.



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