



May 13, 2021

Testimony before the Senate Finance Subcommittee

By Jill Kingston, Executive Director

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Sykes and members of the Senate Finance Committee, I am Jill Kingston, Executive Director of Brigid's Path. I want to first thank you for your commitment to hear health and human service issues in this budget, and for some of you, I send a big thank you for your past support of Brigid's Path and the babies and moms we serve.

I am providing written testimony to request your help to secure continued support of Brigid's Path by maintaining our state funding levels in the Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM) through the next budget period - state fiscal years 2022 and 2023. This would include three million dollars (\$3,000,000) over the biennium, or one and a half million each fiscal year. This tracks previous support levels (with no increase) allocated to Brigid's Path via the Brigid's Path Pilot line item and from the Multi-System Youth budget category. It is imperative for Brigid's Path to receive this bridge funding through the state budget until Ohio Medicaid puts in place permanent rules and rates (delayed because of the pandemic) so we can continue helping babies and moms in Ohio.

We are thankful the House has made the addition of two million dollars (\$2,000,000) over the biennium, or one million each fiscal year. I am request your help to secure the additional one million dollars (\$1,000,000) over the biennium to total the three million dollars (\$3,000,000) over the biennium.

Brigid's Path has been able to make a huge difference in the Dayton and surrounding area since our first admission in 2017. As Ohio's first newborn recovery center, we provide an inpatient, home-like approach to caring for babies born exposed to addictive substances. Brigid's Path employs the latest therapeutic techniques – both pharmacological and nonpharmacological – to help babies as they experience withdrawal. We are proud to have been able to care for more than 100 babies and families in our first three years of operation.

We understand that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this budget cycle is incredibly difficult for the state and ODM. The pandemic has also stressed Brigid's Path financially. Prior to 2020, the majority of our budget was provided by generous donations from our community. Only 23% was provided by state grants. In 2020, however, we were forced to cancel all of our fundraising events. As a result, we had to rely more on state grants and budget funding for over half of our budget. Continued state support is essential in order for Brigid's Path to remain operational over SFY 22/23. Our goal is to work closely with the Department of Medicaid to develop an appropriately funded Medicaid service reimbursement not just by ODM, but largely by the federal government.

Brigid's Path provides a necessary service for babies and moms while also saving state and county dollars by avoiding hospital stays and unnecessary foster care placements. We work with local partners including Children's Services agencies in ten counties and the Montgomery County Safe Baby Court and Family Treatment Court. With the increasing intensity of the opioid crisis in combination with the COVID-19 pandemic, Brigid's Path's services will be needed more than ever.

With a continued investment from the General Assembly and DeWine Administration, Brigid's Path can remain available to offer medical and supportive services to infants born exposed to an addictive substance, and their families.

Below we have provided a fact sheet and other resources for you to learn more about Brigid's Path and our funding request. I would be more than happy to schedule a meeting or call with you and your staff to discuss our request and all of the ways that Brigid's Path can continue to work with the state to help moms and babies in need. Please reach out if we can answer any questions or be of help in any way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jill Kingston".

Jill Kingston

Executive Director, Brigid's Path



Our Mission: **Brigid's Path improves the health of newborn babies and mothers impacted by addiction. We offer families grace for the past, support for the present and hope for the future.**

The Need: **Brigid's Path needs bridge funding through the state budget until the creation of Ohio Medicaid rules and rates. Without this financial assistance, we will not be able to keep our doors open.**

- In 2018, more than 5,500 mothers in Ohio were diagnosed with drug abuse or dependency at the time of delivery.
- In 2018, with help from Ohio Senators Brown and Portman, Brigid's Path amended the Social Security Act. This allows Medicaid to cover healthcare services provided to infants in residential pediatric recovery facilities.
- Since 2017, 73% of our budget has been covered by generous donations of the surrounding community and 23% by the state budget and other state grants.
- In 2020, we had to cancel all of our fundraising events, forcing us to rely more heavily on state grants and budget funding (65% in 2020 vs. 23% in prior years). State support is vital for operations over SFY 22/23.

How does Brigid's Path make a difference?

- As **Ohio's first newborn recovery center**, we provide an inpatient, home-like approach to caring for babies born exposed to addictive substances.
- Offering medical and wraparound care immediately after a baby is born, **we provide a safe place for babies to withdraw and families to get the support they need.**
- **We work one-on-one with moms** to help get the support they need to succeed.
- All babies receive **24/7 care** from skilled medical staff and trained volunteers.
- We cared for **more than 100 babies and families in our first three years** of operation.
- With community partners, **we save state and county dollars by avoiding hospital stays and unnecessary foster care placements.**
- Brigid's Path is focused on the Family First Prevention Services Act and partners with several state programs to **help keep children out of foster care and with their families.**
 - Montgomery County Safe Baby Court and Family Treatment Court
 - Children's Services in 10 counties – and counting!
- The drug crisis is still hitting our communities hard; with increased drug use in 2020, **we expect even more Ohio babies will be born drug-exposed.**

Brigid's Path continues to receive national attention as a high-impact, high-performing nonprofit. We were recently featured on CNN's "[This is Life with Lisa Ling.](#)" The episode covered the ongoing opioid epidemic in Ohio and how we're creating a new, replicable model of care – and it's working!

Who do we help?

- **Pregnant moms** using any addictive substance or in recovery on MAT
- **Postpartum moms** using any addictive substance or in recovery
- **Babies** with prenatal exposure to any substance
- **Any caregivers** (mom, dad, kinship, Safe Families, etc.) who will be caring for babies after a Brigid's Path stay

Anyone can make a referral to Brigid's Path. To make a referral, visit bridgetspath.org/referrals/ or call 937.350.1785, option 4.

How can I learn more?

Visit bridgetspath.org/news/ for recent media placements, newsletters and perspectives from our dedicated team.

Issue Focus

Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome

Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) describes a group of conditions faced by newborn babies born exposed to addictive substances like medication, opioids or other drugs.

Babies with NAS – like those we help at Brigid's Path – experience symptoms of withdrawal after birth, including trembling, seizures, high-pitched crying, vomiting and more.

We hear a common misconception that the babies who come to Brigid's Path are addicted to the substance they were exposed to in the womb; that's not true. They are not addicted because of their prenatal exposure, but they do still experience withdrawal symptoms.

For more information about NAS, visit the [Ohio Perinatal Quality Collaborative NAS Project](#).

Media Placements

[When Heroin Hits Home](#)

CNN: This is Life with Lisa Ling
December 6, 2020

[Lisa Ling on The Opioid Crisis within Child Welfare](#)

Imprint Weekly Podcast
December 6, 2020

[Opinion: A Mother's Fragile Recovery Reminds Us that the Opioid Crisis is Still Here](#)

CNN
December 5, 2020

[Giving Tuesday: Brigid's Path Needs Help Continuing Its Mission During Pandemic](#)

WKEF Dayton 24/7 News Now
December 2, 2020

[Brigid's Path](#)

Being Pro-Life Podcast
December 2020

[Babies Born Opioid-Dependent Get Help at Brigid's Path](#)

Today
May 8, 2018