



Ohio Board of Nursing

Mike DeWine, Governor
Jon Husted, Lt. Governor

Marlene Anielski, Executive Director

Good morning, Chair Carruthers, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the Finance Subcommittee on Health and Human Services. I am Marlene Anielski, the Executive Director of the Ohio Board of Nursing (OBN). Thank you for the opportunity to present information on behalf of OBN.

Our proposed SFY 2024 budget is \$14.6 mm, and SFY 2025 is \$14.6 mm, which is essentially flat from the \$14.5 mm budgeted for SFY 2023. See exhibit 1.

OBN plays a critical role in public protection because nursing touches virtually every citizen of Ohio. The OBN, the largest licensing board, regulates more than 340,500 licensees and certificate holders, including registered nurses (RNs), licensed practical nurses (LPNs) Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs), Dialysis Technicians, Community Health Workers, and Medication Aides. Please see exhibit 2. There are 131 educational institutions with a total of 200 nursing programs in Ohio.

The Board is comprised of thirteen members (eight registered nurses, three of whom are currently advanced practice registered nurses; four licensed practical nurses; and one consumer member) who are appointed by the Governor.

The mission of the Ohio Board of Nursing is to actively safeguard the health of the public through the effective regulation of nursing care. To achieve its mission and goals, the OBN staff consists of approximately 80 employees.

OBN is wholly funded by license fees, the 4K90 Fund, and receives no additional funding from the state's general revenue funds. With the recent implementation of the Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC), the OBN has absorbed an escalating workload without seeking any fee increases since 2004. The OBN is one of several boards that deposit into the 4K90 fund as required by Ohio law.

As the result of the escalating workload, OBN has prioritized process improvements, automated tasks for accuracy and speed, and utilized the principles of LeanOhio, striving to be "simpler, faster, better and less costly." In December 2021, OBN licensing examiners, management team members, and subject matter experts attended an OBN Kaizen event, sponsored by LeanOhio, to dissect current licensing processes, identify areas of process waste, and brainstorm solutions. OBN created a future-state process that is simpler, faster, and better, not only for our staff, but more importantly, for our applicants. Also in the winter of 2021, OBN partnered with the Cleveland Sight Center (CSC) to field customer service calls and assist with some of the most frequently asked questions. On average the CSC answers more than 200 calls per day. OBN recently implemented our in-house customer service department, utilizing new employees and staff support from the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD), a state agency to create workforce prospects for Ohioans.

In May 2022, OBN's Licensure team oversaw an upgrade to the eLicense system to automatically upload background checks into the eLicense applications. Additionally, OBN utilized automated direct email delivery to our licensees to enhance communications and information sharing. OBN worked with our partners at the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) IT to program 11 automated email reminders to our LPN licensees. The reminders were sent throughout the 2022 renewal cycle to ensure timely renewal of licensure. OBN also created a Secure File Transfer Protocol (SFTP) for the 10 education programs with highest number of annual nursing graduates, (which accounts for approximately 25% of our license by examination candidates). The nursing schools can now securely upload program completion letters for their graduates directly into the eLicense portal, where the letters are automatically synched with pending applications. An additional 19 education programs will be added to the SFTP in the coming months to represent 50% of the typical application volume. System enhancements like the Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) integration and SFTP transfer function not only strengthen OBN's goal of expedient application processing, but also support OBN's commitment to increasing the number of skilled nursing professionals in Ohio's workforce.

As mandated by SB 3 in the 134 GA, OBN implemented the Nurse Licensure Compact on January 1, 2023. Ohio was the 39th state to implement the compact. In preparation, OBN undertook several tasks to ensure the transition to multistate licensure would be as seamless as possible for Ohio RNs and LPNs. OBN developed and updated eLicense applications to include NLC specific wording and processes as well as updated all compliance questions for RN and LPN applications. OBN partnered with a marketing vendor to develop outreach and education materials for our key audiences to ensure all were aware of the benefits and requirements associated with NLC implementation and multistate licensure (MSL). OBN staff traveled throughout the state to share the "Caring Beyond State Boundaries with the Nurse Licensure Compact" presentation. Between July and December 2022, OBN presented to more than 100 pre-licensure education programs, more than 40 hospitals and health care providers, and more than 30 professional associations and committees. OBN also attended several high school and college career fairs to share information about the NLC and the nursing profession. OBN fully utilized social media and converted our website to the new Innovate Ohio Platform (IOP) for ease of use by the public. As of February 13, 2023, OBN has received nearly 9,000 MSL conversion service requests and has issued approximately 5,200 MSLs.

In closing, the OBN has an enormous responsibility to be good stewards, acting in the best interest to protect and serve Ohioans ensuring nursing professionals practice to the highest levels of their education and license, while maintaining accountability and professionalism. Our licensees are on the front lines of providing care under difficult circumstances. OBN appreciates your continued support on behalf of Ohio's nurses and the public for whom they care. I thank the committee for the opportunity to share information about nursing regulation and look forward to our continued work with the Administration and the General Assembly. I very much appreciate your time and attention while welcoming your questions and comments.