



**Testimony of Scott S. Osiecki  
Chief Executive Officer**

**Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board of Cuyahoga County**

**Ohio Senate Finance Committee  
Sub. HB 33  
May 25, 2023**

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, I am Scott Osiecki, the Chief Executive Officer of the Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services Board of Cuyahoga County. Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony regarding the Biennial Budget and the need for investments in community mental health and addiction prevention, treatment, and recovery support services. I take this opportunity seriously as the opioid epidemic continues to evolve and claim lives while at the same time the severity of mental illnesses continues to increase.

The ADAMHS Board is charged with maintaining a robust continuum of care, including prevention, crisis, harm reduction, treatment and recovery support services to the residents of Cuyahoga County. This continuum of care and critical services are supported by funding to all ADAMHS Boards through the OhioMHAS Continuum of Care line item (ALI 336-421).

The Ohio House of Representatives made a devastating change to this line item in Sub. HB 33. If passed, the funding would severely reduce allocations to the ADAMHS Boards from nearly \$72 million to \$61 million – that is \$11 million - a 15% reduction from the SFY23 base allocation. This cut would be detrimental to critical community mental health and addiction services throughout the state.

Our Board uses the 336-421 continuum of care funds to provide mental health and substance abuse crisis services, medication assisted treatment, counseling and therapy, case management, intensive home-based treatment, residential treatment, and temporary and permanent housing to the residents of Cuyahoga County. Assuming OhioMHAS would impose a 15% cut to all Boards, this would decrease Cuyahoga County's 336-421 allocation by nearly \$402,000 and would result in the ADAMHS Board making tough decisions to reduce services to the residents of Cuyahoga County.

On behalf of the ADAMHS Board of Cuyahoga County and the people we serve, I respectfully ask that you increase the funding in the OhioMHAS Continuum of Care line (ALI 336-421) so that there is enough funding available, not including the set asides and earmarks, to ensure that ADAMH Boards receive a base allocation of at least \$71,989,846 in each year of the biennium, which is actually flat funding for the ADAMH Boards.

I also request that you restore the Hospital Services line (ALI 336-412) to the as-introduced amount to ensure continuation of state hospital operations at current capacity levels and allow for planned expansion of necessary bed capacity in the amount of 80 new beds. Cuyahoga County routinely has the longest list of clients waiting to be admitted to Northcoast Behavioral Healthcare.

Also, please consider providing an additional \$143 million for the Ohio Department of Medicaid to raise community behavioral health services rates to help stabilize and strengthen the behavioral health workforce. The ADAMHS Board of Cuyahoga County currently funds a network of 77 provider agencies, which are all experiencing a workforce shortage – which is common among my peers across the state. This additional funding would allow for a 20% rate increase for community behavioral health services. Providing higher reimbursement rates will allow provider agencies to begin offering a living wage comparable to other healthcare professions and illustrate the importance of the behavioral health field.

I want to wrap-up where I started - the opioid epidemic continues to evolve and claim lives while at the same time the severity of mental illnesses continues to increase - that is why I respectfully ask you to support our requests, and even more, to help individuals and families living with a mental illness and/or substance use disorder.

Thank you.