

Testimony for Senate Finance Committee

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Contact: Melinda Swan
Co-Founder, Greater Common Good
mewan@anchored2hope.com



Testimony Submitted by Dr. Kelly Kelleher:

Good afternoon, Senators. My name is Kelly Kelleher. I am a Professor of Pediatrics, Public Health and Psychiatry at Nationwide Children’s Hospital and The Ohio State University where I have been for the past twenty years. During that time, I have received more than \$25M in federal research grants to study the problems of violence, drug abuse and mental disorders in our healthcare, foster care and justice systems. In addition, I spent 10 years as a volunteer and volunteer coordinator for North Central Correctional Complex in Marion, Ohio, a medium security facility.

I tell you these things not because what I do matters, but instead to tell you that I have been extensively involved in the emotional and behavioral disorders that affect the majority of persons in our prisons today. Having personally worked to help on several fronts, there are so few resources to help individuals as they re-enter our communities or their families who are affected as well. Moreover, the few resources that are there are generic ones, not designed for persons on probation or parole or under court supervision.

That is why I am excited to be here in support of Greater Common Good, and especially their innovative project known as Anchor4Me. Over the past five years, I have had the opportunity to be involved as an academic partner advising, grant writing, and evaluating aspects of their work. I witnessed the passion of the Greater Common Good team for individuals affected by the justice system, their commitment to high quality development of software tools specifically for this population, and their willingness to take constructive feedback. For example, in the development of their key product, Anchor4Me, as they rolled out ideas for some elements to support psychotherapy, they included practical tools that would be useful for both court personnel and patients.

I believe Anchor4Me will be a powerful tool for community based correctional facilities and halfway houses to add to the options they offer people with mental health and substance abuse needs. As a comprehensive digital platform and virtual community of support designed specifically to meet the unique needs of justice-involved adult, the platform and the enhancements that will be made as part of this pilot will give participants a much-needed resource that can overcome the physical, structural, and economic barriers that contribute to recidivism and relapse.

Ohio has a great chance to lead the nation in the next steps for improving supervision and care. I am confident that this is a best next step in that process.