



**Testimony submitted to the
Senate Finance Committee
June 8, 2023**

**Don Schiffbauer, CEO of The Nord Center (Lorain County)
Eric Morse, President & CEO of The Centers (Cuyahoga County)**

Good afternoon, Chair Dolan, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Senate Health Committee. My name is Eric Morse, President, and CEO of The Centers in Cuyahoga County. With me is Don Schiffbauer, Chief Executive Officer of The Nord Center in Lorain County.

Our organizations share common missions as long-standing community behavioral health centers that provide integrated mental health and addiction treatment services to people of all ages, no matter their background or circumstances. Together, we rise in support of Governor DeWine's budget proposals for the Departments of Medicaid and Mental Health and Addiction Services. The proposed budget includes funding for Medicaid rate increases that will help us keep pace with the rising costs of providing healthcare. We also applaud [OhioMHAS'](#) proposed investments [of OhioMHAS](#) toward strengthening the behavioral health workforce.

At The Centers in Cleveland, [though](#) we have not advertised our behavior health urgent care centers, [we have served](#) ~~but~~ more than 1,500 visitors ~~have been served~~ since opening our doors at two locations in February of last year, with ~~a total of approximately~~ [approximately](#) 3,500 encounters. More than 70% of [the](#) clients ~~have a~~ [are](#) diagnosis of ~~ed with a~~ depressive or anxiety disorder. More than 99% of clients surveyed reported that our care team was accessible, met their needs, and their experience was positive. Perhaps most importantly, 36% of clients said

they would have gone to the emergency room if behavioral health urgent care was not an option.

Another 42% said they were unsure if they would have gone to the ED at all.

And now I like to turn it over to my colleague Don Schiffbauer:

Our behavioral health urgent care centers provide high-quality and high-value care when clients and their families need it. At our organizations, we have opened some of the state's first behavioral health urgent care clinics. The behavioral health urgent care model capitalizes on the need, and at times the courage, of our community to seek services when they need them. These urgent care centers offer an alternative to traditional client throughput of the emergency room or outpatient therapy setting. Behavioral health urgent care provides an alternative that is on-demand, high-quality and more cost-effective than an emergency room visit.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) funded the initial launch of our urgent care centers, but that funding expires in September of this year. We are requesting one-time funding to support our services between September and the time at which current work being done to enhance Medicaid is implemented.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and consider our one-time funding request; we would be happy to take any questions.

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