



Interested Party Testimony on House Bill 33
Senate Health Committee
Ed Gernerchak, Vice President of Behavioral Services, Y-Haven
YMCA of Greater Cleveland
May 9, 2023

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide interested party testimony on House Bill 33. My name is Ed Gernerchak, and I am the Vice President of Behavioral Services at Y-Haven. Formed in 1993 by the YMCA of Greater Cleveland, Y-Haven provides evidence-based addiction treatment for men and women who are experiencing homelessness, re-entering the community from incarceration, or recovering from Opioid Use Disorder. With 250 beds available, Y-Haven is the largest residential treatment provider in the State of Ohio.

Y-Haven provides services including: Substance Use Disorder Treatment, Mental Health Counseling, Vocational Services, Recovery Housing, and an array of cultural and recreational opportunities. We are proud of our exceptional service outcomes including addiction treatment outcomes nearly 3 times the national average with 65% of participants completing 90 days of intensive outpatient treatment.

Y-Haven for Women is our most recent service expansion. For many years, the Cuyahoga County Continuum of Care has not been able to provide transitional housing specifically for women experiencing homelessness. As a result, many women with addiction and mental illness have simply remained in Cleveland's Emergency Women's Shelter until they can find permanent housing. Utilizing the same expert care the YMCA provides men experiencing homelessness, at the start of the year, Y-Haven for Women has begun providing temporary housing and behavioral health services to women experiencing homelessness who face especially high barriers to housing.

We have seen an incredible need for these services since starting this program in February. I ask for your support of a \$250,000 appropriation each fiscal year, which will allow us to double the number of women served.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and for your consideration of this request. I am happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.