

**Ohio Senate Health Committee**  
**Monica Kagey, LSW, MBA**  
**House Bill 33 Proponent Testimony**  
**May 10, 2023**

Chairman Huffman, Vice-Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 33. My name is Monica Kagey and I am the Senior Vice President of Communications and Public Policy for Lighthouse Behavioral Health Solutions.

I am speaking today in support of the 10 million dollar increase in the proposed budget for recovery housing, five million of which will be used for improving the quality of recovery housing residences and defraying costs for attaining certification or accreditation for those recovery houses. Additionally, we support the creation of higher standards for recovery housing in Ohio to protect vulnerable clients and support their journeys towards recovery.

Lighthouse Behavioral Health Solutions began as a passion project born out of our founder's family experience with substance use disorder. We combine intensive outpatient treatment with recovery housing to create a community of people who are working through their recovery together, in a place full of compassion, energy, joy, and hope. Our four core values – honesty, caring, teamwork, and excellence – drive everything that we do. Our comprehensive approach to substance use disorder treatment provides a continuum of care that begins with asking for help and continues through to ongoing peer support. Lighthouse is able to reach many communities throughout Columbus and the surrounding area through our 17 existing treatment centers, with two in Zanesville coming soon, two additional peer support centers, and many recovery housing options. We offer programs to meet our clients where they are, including outpatient treatment, partial hospitalization, teletherapy, peer support, Medication Assisted Treatment, and recovery housing.

Recovery housing is a particularly important part of the treatment journey for those who are struggling with substance use disorder. Without safe and supportive housing, it is very difficult for someone in treatment to have the most successful outcome.

The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services performed an Environmental Scan in 2021 in Ohio for recovery housing. They found that county ADAMH boards struggled to incorporate all the recovery housing options in their counties into their local continuum because some recovery houses were not licensed by OhMHAS or otherwise certified. Additionally, variations in quality of recovery houses persists, due in part to the voluntary nature of certification. The Environmental Scan found that some recovery residences continue to operate despite not meeting quality standards of any kind, and that these homes often are not supporting residents' needs or preferences in their recovery. The proposed budget language will solve these challenges. The budget language includes a requirement for all recovery housing residences to be certified by OhMHAS or accredited by an approved agency. Additionally, OhMHAS will be maintaining a registry of recovery housing residences that are certified or accredited, making it much easier for ADAMH boards and others to identify quality recovery housing resources in their communities.

Lighthouse operates \_\_\_\_ recovery houses, \_\_\_\_ of which are accredited by Ohio Recovery Housing now. We are actively pursuing accreditation for the rest of our houses to ensure they all meet the highest standards.

Chairman Huffman, Vice-Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Health Committee, thank you for your continued dedication to help those struggling with substance use disorder and lack of safe and stable housing in the state of Ohio. I am available for any questions you may have.