



**Ohio Senate Health Committee
HB 33**

**Testimony of:
Cheri L. Walter, MA, LICDC
Chief Executive Officer
Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities
May 10, 2023**

Chairman Huffman, Vice-Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Health Committee, my name is Cheri Walter, and I am the Chief Executive Officer of the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities. We represent Ohio's local Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health (ADAMH) Boards. I appreciate the opportunity to testify today.

Ohio's 50 Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health (ADAMH) Boards, are the local governmental authority covering all 88 counties, providing community members with access to a statutorily defined continuum of care, inclusive of prevention, treatment, and recovery supports, in communities throughout the state.

Local ADAMH Boards are charged with establishing a unified system of prevention, treatment, and community supports for individuals impacted by mental illness and/or addiction. Boards, through contracts with community provider agencies, encourage and foster the development of high-quality, cost effective, and comprehensive services. Local Boards are uniquely positioned to rapidly identify and effectively respond to evolving community needs, while also ensuring the accountable use of public funds. Over the course of the last year, local Boards have partnered with providers, hospitals, businesses, and other units of local government to address the growing behavioral health demand resulting from the stress and anxiety experienced by so many children and adults throughout our state.

Am. Sub. HB 33, as passed by the Ohio House of Representatives, makes several changes that would be detrimental to critical community mental health and addiction services. If enacted, the funding amounts included in Am. Sub. HB 33 would severely limit the Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health (ADAMH) Boards' ability to meet the existing and growing demand from individuals and families for services and supports.

Our first issue of concern is related to the changes proposed to the OhioMHAS Continuum of Care line item (ALI 336-421). This line item represents the largest state GRF investment allocated to the ADAMH Boards to fund the local continuum of care. For the last several years, the ADAMH Board base allocations from this line item have totaled nearly \$72 million per year. The House passed version of the budget decreased the total appropriation in the line from the as-introduced version and increased the number and total amount for dedicated programs or projects. The combination of the decreased appropriation and increased amount of items dedicated in the line will result in a cut in the portion of the line item that remains to be allocated to ADAMH Boards for services within the local continuum of care. If unchanged, the total real dollar cut from Board allocations would be over \$11 million per year (15% less than the SFY 2023 base allocation amount).

ADAMH Boards use the 336-421 continuum of care funds to invest in community crisis, prevention, treatment, and recovery supports. Any decrease in the 336-421 allocation would force Boards to make cuts to crisis services, services in jails, prevention services, housing services, and other recovery supports.

A loss of 15% in community investments will result in cuts to community services and cuts to community services will result in increased pressure on state hospitals, local jails, and emergency departments.

We are requesting that you **restore the Continuum of Care line (ALI 336-421) to the as-introduced amount** and ensure that there is enough funding available, outside of set asides and earmarks, to guarantee that ADAMH Boards receive a base allocation of at least \$71,989,846 in each year of the biennium. This would represent flat funding for the ADAMH Board allocations, which have not been increased for several years.

Attached to my testimony, I've included a detailed breakdown of this line item that shows the proposed appropriation, the number of set-asides, and the number of program specific earmarks that are included in the line item in the House-passed version of the budget.

We are also asking 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.
- **Support an additional \$143 million investment in Medicaid community behavioral health services** rates to stabilize and strengthen the behavioral health workforce.
- **Restore the Criminal Justice Services line (ALI 336-422) to the as-introduced amount** to ensure that local services, including services in local jails, are able to continue. The increased investment will also allow for enhancing forensic services.
- **Increase the investment in the Residential State Supplement line (ALI 336-510).** Returning to the as introduced amount would ensure that adult care facilities (ACFs) are able to continue operations to provide housing for individuals with mental illness.
- **Restore the Prevention and Wellness line (ALI 336-406) to the as-introduced amount** in order to maintain and expand prevention activities, with a specific focus on suicide prevention.

In addition to the funding to support community behavioral health services and state psychiatric hospitals, we would also ask you to support the Student Wellness and Success funding and language changes in the Ohio Department of Education's budget. We know that a crisis is erupting in children's mental health. In Ohio the number of children diagnosed with anxiety or depression jumped by 42% in 2020. We know this has a direct impact on our schools, with 70% of them reporting an increase in the percentage of their students seeking mental health services since the start of the pandemic. Continuing these funds and ensuring that at least 50% of them must be utilized on mental health and/or physical health will be a significant help in addressing this issue.

As demand for care continues to surge, communities must ensure the existence of a full scope of care within the local continuum of care. In order to do this, we are going to need your help. We look forward to the opportunity to partner with the General Assembly, the Administration, OhioMHAS, providers, family members, and other stakeholders to continue collaborating to ensure that all Ohioans have access to a complete continuum of care from prevention through recovery supports.

I want to thank you all for your interest in these issues and your ongoing focus on helping Ohioans with mental illness and addiction. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. At this point I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

OACBHA Budget Priorities

336-421 Line Item – Funds ADAMH Boards Continuum of Care

OACBHA Recommendation: Restore the Continuum of Care line (ALI 336-421) to the as-introduced amount and ensure that ADAMH Boards receive a base of at least \$71,989,846 as they have for the last several years.

With the loss of some of the base allocations ADAMH Boards would be forced to cut funding for crisis services, treatment for individuals who are not Medicaid eligible, hospital placement, housing, recovery supports, services in jails, transportation, and other components of the local continuum of care.

Line item information:

Line Item	Line Item Name	SFY 2024 As Introduced	SFY 2024 House Passed	SFY 2025 As Introduced	SFY 2025 House Passed
336-421	Continuum of Care	\$106,214,846	\$96,539,000	\$106,214,846	\$96,539,000

Dedicated items included in 336-421 line item

\$ 9,000,000.00	Access to Wellness (formerly MSA)	Set-aside in as-introduced
\$ 1,500,000.00	Crisis Stabilization Centers (regions)	Set-aside in as-introduced
\$ 2,500,000.00	Crisis infrastructure	Set-aside in as-introduced
\$ 6,500,000.00	Ohio START	Set-aside in as-introduced
\$ 1,000,000.00	ACF quality	Set-aside in as-introduced
\$ 4,000,000.00	MRSS	Set-aside in as-introduced
\$ 7,000,000.00	Indigent hospital access	Set-aside in as-introduced
\$ 2,000,000.00	Bellefaire Jewish Children's	Earmark added by House
\$ 375,000.00	Arika's Angels	Earmark added by House
\$ 150,000.00	POEM - Mental Health America	Earmark added by House
\$ 150,000.00	Save a Warrior	Earmark added by House
\$ 225,000.00	LifeTown Columbus	Earmark added by House
\$ 550,000.00	CHC Addiction Services - RAMAR	Earmark added by House
\$ 350,000.00	Star House	Earmark added by House
\$ 250,000.00	Flying Horse Farms	Earmark added by House
\$ 35,550,000.00	Total Dedicated Amount Per Year	

Preliminary calculations for 336-421 are now as follows:

Appropriated Amount	\$ 96,539,000.00
Dedicated Amount	\$ 35,550,000.00
Remaining for Allocations	\$ 60,989,000.00

In FY 2023, ADAMH Boards received ~\$71,989,846 in base allocations from the 336-421 line item

As passed by the House, this would result in a real dollar cut of \$11,000,846 to ADAMH Board allocations for the local continuums of care.

OACBHA Budget Priorities

Hospital Services

Line Item	Line Item Name	SFY 2024 As Introduced	SFY 2024 House Passed	SFY 2025 As Introduced	SFY 2025 House Passed
336-412	Hospital Services	\$318,588,247	\$288,000,000	\$344,258,948	\$310,000,000

OACBHA Recommendation: Restore the OhioMHAS Hospital Services line 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.

Community Behavioral Health Medicaid

OACBHA Recommendation: Support an additional \$143 million (all funds) investment in Medicaid community behavioral health services rates to stabilize and strengthen the behavioral health workforce. This request compliments the Governor's as introduced 10% rate increase (\$220 million all funds) and the 3.5% increase (\$77 million all funds) added by the House (ODM Section 333.29 of Am. Sub. HB 33). Data shows our system requires a 20% increase in Medicaid rates to keep up with inflationary costs and simply compete for workers.

Criminal Justice Services

Line Item	Line Item Name	SFY 2024 As Introduced	SFY 2024 House Passed	SFY 2025 As Introduced	SFY 2025 House Passed
336-422	Criminal Justice Services	\$30,044,829	\$21,000,000	\$30,044,829	\$21,000,000

OACBHA Recommendation: Restore the Criminal Justice Services line to the as-introduced amount to ensure that local services, including services in local jails, are able to continue. The increased investment will also allow for enhancing forensic services.

Residential State Supplement

Line Item	Line Item Name	SFY 2024 As Introduced	SFY 2024 House Passed	SFY 2025 As Introduced	SFY 2025 House Passed
336-510	Residential State Supplement	\$24,000,000	\$16,000,000	\$24,000,000	\$16,000,000

OACBHA Recommendation: Increase the investment in the RSS line. Returning to the as introduced amount would ensure that adult care facilities (ACFs) are able to continue operations to provide housing for individuals with mental illness.

Prevention and Wellness

Line Item	Line Item Name	SFY 2024 As Introduced	SFY 2024 House Passed	SFY 2025 As Introduced	SFY 2025 House Passed
336-406	Prevention and Wellness	\$13,868,659	\$7,000,000	\$13,868,659	\$7,000,000

OACBHA Recommendation: Restore the Prevention and Wellness line to the as-introduced amount in order to maintain and expand prevention activities, with a specific focus on suicide prevention.