



## Ohio House Children and Human Services Committee HB 96

Testimony of:  
Liz Henrich, MA  
Chief Executive Officer  
Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities  
February 26, 2025

Chairwoman White, Vice-Chair Salvo, Ranking Member Lett, and members of the House Children and Human Services Committee, my name is Liz Henrich, 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. Local Boards continue to partner with providers, hospitals, businesses, and other units of local government to address the growing demand for behavioral health services and supports.

We are very appreciative of the Governor's SFY 2026-2027 biennial budget and his and Director Cornyn's ongoing recognition of the needs of Ohioans and their continued prioritization of community investments in mental health and addiction services. Individuals and families throughout Ohio impacted by mental illness and substance use disorders will benefit from this budget.

We support the Department of Behavioral Health's proposal to establish state block grants to provide funding to ADAMH Boards to contract for services and supports. The block grants will provide Boards with flexibility to meet local needs in six categories - Prevention, Mental Health, Substance Use Disorder, Crisis, Recovery Supports, and Criminal Justice. We are encouraged by the Department's proposal to establish these block grants and streamline how ADAMH Boards receive funding from the state. We look forward to partnering with the Department to work through the details of the block grant development and implementation.

Our review of the proposed funding totals for the block grants shows that the general revenue investment for services funded by ADAMH Boards in SFY 2026-2027 would be consistent with the amounts received in SFY 2024-2025. We encourage you to maintain the proposed investments in the state block grants.

Along with the block grant changes, we look forward to working with the Department to structure financial and programmatic reporting that will show how the funds are planned for and spent to address needs

identified through the ADAMH Boards' community planning process. ADAMH Boards are public bodies empowered to spend local, state, and federal taxpayer funds. Boards are committed to ensuring that an array of coordinated, accountable, and accessible services and supports are available for individuals and families in need.

As you continue your review of the proposed budget for the Department of Behavioral Health, we encourage you to maintain the investments in community prevention, treatment, and recovery services and supports.

In this budget, the Department of Behavioral Health proposes using new revenue generated by a tax on adult-use cannabis to support the operations of 988. We encourage you to restore the voter passed language that directed 25% of the sales tax collected from adult use cannabis to support a substance use and addiction fund. Further, we encourage you to target a portion of those funds to be allocated to ADAMH Boards to support community prevention, treatment, and recovery services.

I would briefly like to touch on conversations and efforts to address property taxes in Ohio. My focus today will not be on any specific proposal, but I want to shine a light on the way that property taxes are used throughout Ohio to support community mental health and addiction services. Currently, 47 Boards have approved property tax levies in one or more of their counties (78 total counties) that are used to support community mental health and addiction services. These levies collectively generate approximately \$400 million each year to fund prevention, treatment, and recovery support services throughout Ohio. In conversations about tax changes and/or modification, we need to ensure that these voter-approved investments in critical, lifesaving mental health and addiction services are not diminished.

Lastly, while Medicaid funds do not directly flow through ADAMH Boards, we are invested in the success and stability of the Medicaid program, for the clients we collectively serve and the provider agencies that deliver services. In this budget, we support the Ohio Department of Medicaid's plans to sustain the rate increases that were included in the last budget cycle.

We look forward to the opportunity to partner with the Ohio Department of Behavioral Health, 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.