

**Interested Party Testimony on HB96  
Before the Ohio House Finance Committee  
Lisa Golden, Triple P - Positive Parenting Program**

**March 13, 2025**

Chairman Stewart, Vice-Chairman Dovilla and Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the Finance Committee, thank you for efforts on Ohio's state operating budget. My name is Lisa Golden. I've spent many years working with Ohio families as a licensed social worker and now work as an implementation consultant for Triple P - The Positive Parenting Program. I'm here to testify in support of Amendment HC1340, which would provide \$1 million in funding for a parenting program, called Fear-Less Triple P, to be delivered online and in-person to support parents.

**Triple P in Ohio**

Triple P is one of the most widely used and effective evidence-based parenting programs in the world. Many states across the country are making investments in our parenting programs to give parents simple and practical strategies to confidently manage their children's behavior and prevent issues from developing. The Ohio Children's Trust Fund has invested in Triple P for over 15 years and Ohio has trained practitioners in every region of the state from a variety of agencies. In 2022, the Governor and the legislature invested in Triple P Online (TPOL), a self-paced online parenting intervention with videos and interactive activities to support Ohio families statewide. This investment also included a broad communications strategy raising awareness of the availability of Triple P Online and, importantly, destigmatizing the notion of parents accessing support. Beginning in May 2022, the communications strategy has generated over 400,000 website visits to the Ohio Triple P Online website, resulting in over 34,000 participants from each of the state's 88 counties accessing Triple P Online. Participation has been especially high in rural areas – including Appalachian counties with high child poverty rates – suggesting TPOL's value in reaching these underserved areas.

**Expanding access and resources to meet the mental health needs of children, youth, and families in Ohio**

With the current level of increased anxiety, depression and other behavioral health needs of children and youth and the challenge within the existing systems of care to meet these needs, we need options that can provide immediate, actionable support for parents and caregivers to mitigate the negative impacts. We can leverage off the success of Triple P Online and the broad reach it has, to address the significant number of children affected by anxiety.

Supporting children experiencing anxiety is a critical issue for the state. Children experiencing anxiety can have impaired relationships with family members and peers, school performance, and are at risk for substance misuse. Addressing these issues is important to the long-term success of Ohio.

The Triple P model has existing content and a new variant, Fear-less Triple P, that could significantly improve access to supports both through the network of Triple P providers in Ohio and through engaging interested behavioral health providers including the network of the children's hospital system and mental health professionals within school districts across the state. Fear-less Triple P is available for delivery in an on-line format and in-person.

Triple P has a new variant, Fear-Less Triple P, specific to supporting children ages 6-14 experiencing anxiety and worry, which teaches parents and caregivers effective techniques for responding and managing these concerns. According to a recent brief by Health Policy Institute of Ohio, children in Ohio ages 3-17 are slightly above the national average in rates of anxiety from 2021-2022 data with a rate of 12% in the state compared to 10% nationally. With more than 1 in 10 children affected, it reasons that many youths on behavioral health waitlists have symptoms of anxiety. Offering a program that equips parents and caregivers to be able to better support their children could potentially reduce these waitlists, reach more families more efficiently, and have a significant impact in mitigating the effects of anxiety and improving outcomes for youth. Ohio providers in Knox County are the first in the U.S. to have been trained delivering the group format and continue to express the need as well as benefits for this programming.

The State of Wisconsin recently made a \$3 million investment in Triple P Online including Fear-Less Triple P Online. Fear-Less Triple P is helping relieve pressure on their workforce by reducing their long wait lists for assessments. Children's

Wisconsin recently conducted several intake events to connect with families on their existing behavioral health waitlists; during these events, they triaged 516 intakes and were able to refer 187 families to Triple P programming (36% of families). These results demonstrated that some families waiting for a behavioral health screening could instead utilize other services and supports, and suggests that we can look to other types of programs like Triple P to help support the behavioral health workforce shortage that we face nationwide.

With a small investment of approximately \$1,000,000, Ohio could serve 7,500 families through Fear-Less Triple P Online and train 60 new providers across the state to serve an additional 1,800 families. At a time when concern for the mental health of children and youth, as well as that of their parents and caregivers, is growing; our traditional system of clinically trained providers continues to shrink, causing longer wait times for access to community-based mental health providers, Fear-Less can provide valuable support.

### **Fear-Less Triple P**

Fear-Less Triple P is a new, cognitive-behavioral parenting program for parents (and caregivers) of children aged 6 to 14 years with anxiety. The aim is not to eliminate children's fear but rather to support parents to help children manage their anxiety more effectively and to become less fearful, hence the name Fear-Less. The program encourages parents to generalize strategies to all family members, not just the child of concern.

Fear-Less Triple P has four main goals:

- To help parents set a good example of coping with anxiety;
- To assist parents to coach all their children to become emotionally resilient;
- To help parents develop a toolbox of strategies for supporting children to manage their anxiety more effectively; and,
- To help parents choose effective ways to respond to their children's anxiety.

Fear-Less Triple P group or one-on-one intervention is designed for parents and caregivers of children with moderate to high levels of anxiety that cause significant distress or negatively impact their everyday functioning. The program is typically delivered to groups or individuals over a 6-week period. Where parents are unable to attend 6 weekly sessions, the program can be delivered as a workshop – the same content, condensed into 6 hours that can be offered as a 1-day event or as three, 2-hour blocks.

Fear-Less Triple P Online is an intervention delivered online that supports parents and caregivers to help children manage their anxiety more effectively. The program involves six (1-hour) online modules with videos and interactive activities (e.g. quizzes and self-reflection tasks) that parents complete independently in their own time and at their own pace, from a computer, tablet or smartphone. Like the group or one-on-one intervention, the program is designed for parents of children who have anxiety that causes significant distress or impacts on their everyday life. Some parents may prefer to complete an online program due to busy schedules, geographical isolation, or inability to attend a regular parenting course.

With that, Chairman Stewart, I'll conclude my remarks and am happy to take any question you or the committee may have.