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Lauren Holly, Executive Director

In Support of an Amendment to HB 96 to Increase Funding for the Ohio Brain Injury Program

Chair Stewart, Vice Chair Dovilla, Ranking Member Sweeney, and Members of the House Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today in strong support of an amendment to House Bill 96, which seeks to increase funding for Ohio’s Brain Injury Program. My name is Lauren Holly, and I serve as Executive Director of the Brain Injury Association of Ohio. Through my work and in my own family, I have seen firsthand the critical impact of brain injury services on individuals, families, and communities across our state.

Brain injury is often called the “silent epidemic” because its effects are not always visible, yet they are profound. Each year, thousands of Ohioans sustain brain injuries due to motor vehicle crashes, falls, strokes, overdoses, and other traumatic events. Brain injury can happen to anyone at any time. Many survivors experience cognitive, physical, and emotional challenges that disrupt their ability to work, maintain relationships, and live independently. Without proper support, survivors are at higher risk for unemployment, homelessness, substance misuse, and involvement in the criminal justice system.

Ohio currently funds brain injury services at just five cents per resident, while Pennsylvania invests 42 cents per resident—over eight times as much. Due to this lack of funding, every day BIAOH must refer Ohioans to other states for services that should exist here at home.

**State Funding for Persons with Brain Injury in
Ohio and Surrounding States**

Prepared by the Ohio Brain Injury Program

	2020 State Population	State Expenditures for Brain Injury	State Expenditures per Resident
Ohio—current	11.8M	\$.6M	5¢
Ohio—proposed	11.8M	\$1.8M	15¢
Pennsylvania	13.0M	\$5.4M	42¢
Indiana	6.7M	\$6.3M	94¢
West Virginia	1.8M	\$2.6M	\$1.46
Kentucky	4.5M	\$49.2M	\$5.27



The Brain Injury Association of Ohio is a vital lifeline for brain injury survivors across the state. We connect brain injury survivors to Neuro Resource Facilitation (NRF) services, ensuring they receive the rehabilitation, benefits, and community support they need. NRF has been proven to improve outcomes by reducing unnecessary hospitalizations, preventing homelessness, and helping individuals return to work and school.

According to the Ohio Brain Injury Advisory Committee's 2019 Biennial Report on the Impact of Traumatic Brain Injury on the People of Ohio, the estimated lifetime costs for Ohioans identified in 2014 data amount to \$5 billion, covering only medical care and lost wages. Programs proposed to be funded by this increase actively reduce costs to the state. There is strong scientific support for the efficacy of resource facilitation in significantly improving return to work and school for brain injury survivors, as well as reducing recidivism among justice-involved individuals with TBI who are reentering the community. Additionally, resource facilitation has been correlated with a decrease in the level of disability associated with brain injury and a reduction in the services needed by individuals after completing the process.

The additional funding will enable us to:

- Increase access to Neuro Resource Facilitation services statewide, particularly in rural and underserved areas. This program assists survivors in returning to the community, getting back to work, and life
- Launch the BrainSTEPS program in Ohio, which is currently offered in Pennsylvania and Colorado. This is a nationally recognized model for brain injury school-based educational consulting, helping children who have suffered a brain injury achieve educational success through graduation.
- Support innovative programs like NeuroSparks, which provides intensive rehabilitation to survivors who have plateaued and are no longer eligible for therapy through insurance.
- Strengthen Ohio's brain injury service infrastructure to ensure long-term sustainability and effectiveness.

Investing in brain injury services is not just a moral imperative; it is also fiscally responsible. By providing early intervention and support, we can reduce reliance on costly emergency services, Medicaid-funded long-term care, and other public assistance programs.

On behalf of the individuals and families we serve, I urge you to support this amendment to HB 96 and increase funding for the Ohio Brain Injury Program. Your support will make a tangible difference in the lives of thousands of Ohioans who deserve the opportunity to recover, regain independence, and contribute meaningfully to our communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.