

Dear Ms. Schmidt and Members of the Health Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of increased funding for brain injury services in Ohio's state budget. My name is Dr. Susan Davies, and I serve as the Chair of the Department of Counselor Education and Human Services at the University of Dayton, as well as the Director of the Brain Health Collective in the Greater Dayton area. My professional work and research focus on supporting individuals with brain injuries, their families, and the professionals who serve them.

Consider the story of Michael, a local high school student who sustained a brain injury in a car accident. His recovery was prolonged, leading to frustration and mental health challenges, including depression, and challenges entering the workforce after graduation. This experience highlights the complex and often unseen struggles that students with brain injuries face when returning to their academic routines.

Brain injuries affect thousands of Ohioans each year. Alarming, almost 1 in 4 Ohioans will sustain at least one brain injury in their lifetime. approximately 25% of Ohioans will experience a brain injury in their lifetime, impacting their ability to work, learn, and engage in daily life. The consequences of TBI can be profound, often leading to long-term cognitive, emotional, and physical challenges. Unfortunately, access to care, resources, and support services remains limited due to funding constraints.

In my role, I work closely with educators, mental health professionals, and healthcare providers who witness firsthand the struggles of individuals living with brain injury. These individuals, including children, veterans, and older adults, require comprehensive, coordinated services to maximize their independence and quality of life. However, many are unable to receive the necessary care due to financial barriers and a lack of adequately funded programs. There is also a need for professional education and evidence-based research to ensure we have an informed workforce meeting the needs of Ohioans with brain injuries.

By increasing state funding for brain injury services, Ohio can expand access to critical resources, including rehabilitation programs, school-based supports, vocational training, mental health services, professional education, and research. Investing in brain injury care not only improves outcomes for survivors, but also reduces long-term costs associated with disability, unemployment, and healthcare expenditures.

I urge this committee to prioritize funding for brain injury services in the state budget, both for the Ohio Brain Injury Program and regional efforts such as our Brain Health Collective. By doing so, Ohio can lead the way in providing compassionate, evidence-based support for individuals and families affected by brain injury.

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

Sincerely,



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