



**Ohio House Health Committee**  
Testimony on HB 172

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Chairwoman Schmidt, Vice Chair Deeter, Ranking Member Somani, and members of the House Health Committee, thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony regarding H.B. 172. My name is Christina Shaynak-Diaz and I am an Associate CEO with the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities. We represent Ohio's local Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health (ADAMH) Boards.

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.

My testimony is intended to underscore why it is critical for young people in Ohio to retain access to time-limited confidential mental health services without the requirement for parental consent. Ohio continues to face rising youth mental health needs, and the ability to seek help in a confidential setting is often the factor that determines whether a young person reaches out for support at all.

Confidentiality is not just about privacy—it is a lifeline. For many young people, especially those in crisis or facing urgent challenges, the assurance that their conversations with mental health professionals will remain private is what enables them to seek help in the first place. Without confidentiality, many young people simply won't take that first step toward getting the support they need.

Importantly, offering confidential services does not exclude parents from the process. In fact, research shows that when young people feel safe and respected, they are more likely to involve their parents or guardians as treatment progresses. Confidentiality at the outset encourages engagement, which ultimately strengthens family involvement and support.

Protecting access to confidential mental health services is a proactive, prevention-focused approach that helps Ohio's youth get support before problems escalate into crises that can lead to academic failure, hospitalization, or long-term mental health challenges. We look forward to finding a solution that continues to allow Ohio's young people to address their mental health needs early and effectively, without unnecessary barriers that could prevent them from seeking help.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony. Should you have any questions, please contact me at [cdiaz@oacbha.org](mailto:cdiaz@oacbha.org).