



17 S High Street, Suite 799, Columbus, OH 43215  
614-228-0747 | [www.TheOhioCouncil.org](http://www.TheOhioCouncil.org)  
f t i @theohiocouncil

**Teresa Lampl, LISW-S**  
**House Health Committee**  
**Testimony on HB 172**  
**November 19, 2025**

Chair Schmidt, Vice Chair Deeter, Ranking Member Somani, and members of the House Health Committee thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony today in opposition to HB 172 – a legislative measure that would wholly repeal section 5122.04 of the Ohio Revised Code – a critically important authority permitting mental health professionals to offer outpatient mental health services to youth 14 or older on a temporary basis (six sessions or 30 days). If enacted, this bill would prove harmful to Ohio’s efforts to reach out to and provide critical services and supports to youth when they are feeling unsafe, afraid, and seeking help.

I am Teresa Lampl, CEO of the Ohio Council of Behavioral Health and Family Services Providers (the Ohio Council). The Ohio Council is a statewide trade and advocacy association representing over 170 private businesses that employ nearly 40,000 people and provide services to approximately 2.5 million Ohioans from all walks of life. Our members are nationally accredited and state certified organizations that strive to offer high-quality prevention, mental health, substance use treatment, crisis intervention, and recovery services in all corners of the state.

Let me start by saying that many organizations in the Ohio Council work with children, youth, and families in various settings – and parental consent and family engagement are hallmarks of our clinical service models. We agree that parents are critical partners in the lives of their children and we encourage active engagement in their children’s care. In the vast majority of scenarios where a youth engages in treatment, parental consent is obtained without significant problems. However, there are few situations where consent cannot be readily obtained and delaying or denying treatment would most likely lead to negative outcomes for the youth, families, and our communities.

Section 5122.04 is the only statutory mechanism that allows services to start when consent cannot be obtained, despite reasonable effort. The law is clear that mental health treatment for minors requires parental consent; this statute gives narrow exceptions. Repealing this authority would mean there is no legal pathway to begin even short-term counseling if the parent cannot be reached immediately. There are routine circumstances when parents or guardians simply cannot be reached such as when parents are at work and unable to answer a call or phone numbers are disconnected and voicemails are full.

Providers also face situations where the legal guardian is unclear or unavailable. This includes situations such as the death of a parent, parents being incarcerated or in treatment, youth living with relatives without legal custody documents, child custody disputes, and homeless or runaway

youth. Without this provision, youth cannot receive any behavioral health service unless a crisis rises to imminent danger. This forces schools and providers to choose between providing no support or escalating crisis unnecessarily.

Further, when young people disclose impulsive or self-harming thoughts during the school day or in moments of distress, sometimes parents cannot be immediately reached. Today, providers can currently briefly assess, begin safety planning and stabilizing while simultaneously continuing efforts to contact the parents. HB 172 would prohibit these early interventions and could force providers to either send a distressed and potentially suicidal youth away without support or escalate to crisis pathways that may not yet be clinically indicated. Repealing section 5122.04 would create delays in situations where youth are actively asking for help.

Finally, and in the perhaps the most troubling scenario, this limited authority is essential for youth who are afraid or unsure if it is safe to disclose abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Youth rarely disclose abuse, neglect, or exploitation at the first conversation and need time to build trust to understand what will happen if they do disclose. In many cases, the youth want to engage their parents and guardians, but they just don't know how or are simply afraid of the consequences after they disclose such sensitive information. Section 5122.04 allows providers the ability to support and help the youth engage parents or guardians. Unfortunately, HB 172 would remove the ability to begin the critical rapport-building phase, thus increasing the risks for harmed youth.

In conclusion, the Ohio Council must oppose HB 172, and we encourage the committee not to advance this measure forward. Ohio is making progress with respect to our efforts to address youth mental health. We need more tools and resources to engage our youth as they are asking for help not less.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify and I am happy to answer any questions.