



Ohio Children's Alliance

Leading change for child and family service providers

Ohio Senate Addiction and Community Revitalization Committee

April 8, 2025

Proponent Testimony: SB 138

Ohio Children's Alliance Testimony on SB 138

Chair Landis, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Blackshear, and members of the Senate Addiction and Community Revitalization Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 138.

My name is Kate Rossman and I am the Policy Manager at the Ohio Children's Alliance. For over 50 years, this statewide nonprofit advocacy organization has advanced the interests of community-based child and family services providers serving every corner of Ohio. Our network of 90 behavioral health and child welfare organizations are key partners in addressing issues facing young people in our state, including their local ADAMH boards.

We would like to thank the sponsor, Vice Chair Johnson, for his hard work on this legislation during this and the previous General Assembly through SB 105. This legislation is the result of a compromise between ADAMH boards and the community-based providers they partner with to offer services. We are grateful to Senator Johnson and his co-sponsor from the last General Assembly, Senator Sykes, for bringing providers and boards to the table and for their patience in letting the interested parties develop a mutually agreed solution to the contracting issue. The version of SB 138 currently pending in this committee will set a more durable foundation for providers to build and maintain strong partnerships with their local ADAMH boards.

Looking back at SB 105, our behavioral health members were most concerned about the proposed changes to contracts between themselves and ADAMH boards. **SB 138 has alleviated those concerns**, largely thanks to the requirement that transition of care be included in contracts. Service contracts between boards and providers are not about numbers on paper, they are about providing care to members of our communities in need. By allowing for a 60-day period to coordinate continuity of care, people receiving care can better prepare for changes and not be left behind due to changes in business arrangements. This legislation keeps contracting focused on ensuring community members in need receive the appropriate care they need.

We also support the other changes made to contracting procedures. This includes the requirement that contracts include the option to appeal to the deciding party's board when a contract is terminated early. We believe that all parties in these contracts act in good faith, but allowing the terminated party to make a case for continuing the agreement is a necessary safeguard. In addition, we support concentrating board review of provider costs on only the elements specific to services and supports under contract. This offers providers additional privacy and keeps contracting discussions focused on the services to be provided. Finally, we support the explicit requirement that ADAMH boards comply with the early termination or non-renewal notice requirements when competitively selecting providers to offer services. We have no opposition to boards using competitive selection,

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but this ensures fairness for providers already working under contract. In summary, the revised contracting language in SB 138 provides necessary safeguards for our behavioral health members.

Another area of improvement in this bill is OhioMHAS' role in coordinating data sharing. We understand the desire for boards to have better access to data related to the services they have under contract and support a collaborative approach that engages both boards and providers. Like with this bill, a collaborative process between stakeholders will result in an effective policy that meets the needs of the parties present.

Thanks to the hard work of providers and boards, SB 138 will allow for a greater focus from both sides on what matters most: caring for community members in need. For these reasons, **we would ask that the committee support SB 183.**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am happy to answer any questions from the committee.

Sincerely,

Kate Rossman
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