



## Ohio Deflection Association



### Ohio Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

May 14, 2025

#### Proponent Testimony on Senator Johnson's Budget Amendment

Chair Schaffer, Vice Chair Koehler, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and Esteemed Members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on this budget amendment submitted by Senator Terry Johnson. My name is Tom Fallon. I am a retired law enforcement officer with 35 years of service, most recently as Commander of the Hamilton County Heroin Task Force and Quick Response Team (QRT) from 2015 through the end of 2024. I now serve as Executive Director of the Ohio Deflection Association and Legislative Chair for the Ohio Task Force Commanders Association.

In response to the overdose crisis, I led the law enforcement efforts in Hamilton County to both hold drug dealers accountable and connect individuals to treatment through the creation of the Hamilton County QRT. This balanced strategy has contributed to a 30% decrease in overdose deaths from 2023 to 2024, following a 9% decrease from 2022 to 2023.

#### Why Support This Amendment:

QRT/Deflection, launched in Hamilton and Lucas Counties in 2015, has grown to 80 teams statewide. Initially focused on post-overdose outreach, deflection now addresses substance use, mental health, homelessness, and other social needs. Many of Ohio's drug task forces now partner with QRT teams.

Data from Cordata, our statewide partner, shows QRTs' significant impact:

- Over 40,000 documented interactions in 2024, serving 21,000 Ohioans.
- Strong presence in both urban and rural communities.
- 34,000+ Ohioans served from 2015-2023 via 93,000+ documented interactions
- 20,600+ Ohioans referred/connected to treatment and services from 2015-2023
- Connections were to addiction treatment, housing, mental health services, and peer support.

#### Cost Savings:

Montgomery County Ohio Study shows QRT engagement leads to major Medicaid savings:

- One QRT interaction saves \$17,000 annually per client; three or more saves \$42,000.
- With 65% of clients on Medicaid, this means over \$232 million in savings annually—potentially over \$500 million with repeat engagement.



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### **Criminal Justice Impact:**

QRT/Deflection engagement also reduces non-drug-related arrests, violent crime charges, and overall justice system involvement.

### **Conclusion:**

QRT and Deflection programs save lives, strengthen communities, cut healthcare costs, and reduce strain on the justice system. With several years of valuable data from Ohio QRT/Deflection teams in the Cordata system, we can continuously evaluate and refine these programs to meet the specific needs of each community they serve. Expanding and supporting these initiatives is both a fiscally responsible and socially impactful decision for Ohio.

I urge your support for this amendment. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Tom Fallon  
Executive Director  
Ohio Deflection Association