



Brown County
Board of Mental Health & Addiction Services

Ohio Senate Education Committee
Proponent Testimony SB 7

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Brown County Board of Mental Health & Addiction Services
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Chairman Brenner, Vice-Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Education Committee thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 7. My name is Deanna Vietze, and I am the Executive Director of the Brown County Board of Mental Health & Addiction Services as well as President-Elect of the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities. ADAMH boards are statutorily responsible for planning, funding (within the available resources, and monitoring public mental health and addiction treatment, prevention, and recovery supports.

I want to start by thanking Senator Johnson for introducing this important piece of legislation. He serves my district and has been a tremendous advocate for ADAMH boards and understands the importance of behavioral health treatment, prevention, recovery supports, and education.

I am submitting this testimony in support of SB 7 and the modifications that would ensure evidence-based prevention and education programs that address drugs of abuse, including marijuana and vaping within all K-12 school curricula.

I receive numerous phone calls from school personnel regarding how to handle students who vape or are using marijuana or illicit drugs. Students argue that marijuana is now legal so it can't be harmful. Updating Ohio law to require instruction annually about the risks and harmful effects of short term or chronic substance use. I recently read that Canada is conducting research that links cannabis use disorder and schizophrenia as well as psychosis (ottawacitizen.com/news). Our communities need to understand these risks and SB 7 will help achieve this in age and developmentally appropriate ways.

I am supportive of requiring the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce to collaborate with the Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services to develop lists of evidence-based curricula. Ensuring that the school personnel have proven curricula, materials, and resources ensures that students will receive valid and reliable instruction.

I passionately believe in the power of prevention and know that it is not only less fiscally expensive than treatment, but it is also less physical and emotionally expensive than addiction. Children are experimenting with drugs at alarmingly young ages and waiting until experimentation begins to provide prevention is too late.

I look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure our children receive quality, evidence-based prevention curricula and access behavioral health treatment and supports when needed. Chairman Brenner, thank you for allowing me to provide this testimony. If you have any questions, please contact me at dvietze@bcmhas.org.