



Ohio Senate Finance Committee HB 96

Testimony of:
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Chairman Cirino, Vice-Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, my name is Liz Henrich, and I am the Chief Executive Officer of the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities. We represent Ohio's local Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health (ADAMH) Boards. I appreciate the opportunity to testify today.

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.

Local ADAMH Boards are charged with establishing a unified system of prevention, treatment, and community supports for individuals impacted by mental illness and/or addiction. Boards, through contracts with community provider agencies, encourage and foster the development of high-quality, cost effective, and comprehensive services. Local Boards are uniquely positioned to rapidly identify and effectively respond to evolving community needs, while also ensuring the accountable use of public funds. Local Boards continue to partner with providers, hospitals, businesses, and other units of local government to address the growing demand for behavioral health services and supports.

We are very appreciative of the ongoing recognition of the needs of Ohioans and the continued prioritization of community investments in mental health and addiction services. As you continue your review of the biennial budget, we encourage you to maintain the investments in community prevention, treatment, and recovery services and support.

State Block Grants

We are supportive of the Department of Behavioral Health's proposal to establish state block grants to provide funding to ADAMH Boards to contract for services and supports. The block grants will provide Boards with flexibility to meet local needs in six categories - Prevention, Mental Health, Substance Use Disorder, Crisis, Recovery Supports, and Criminal Justice. The State Block Grant investments, as proposed in the Executive Budget, will result in near level funding across many lines as ADAMH Boards received in the current state fiscal year.

We urge you to reverse the House proposed decrease in the Criminal Justice Services Line (336-422) and restore the funds targeted for the Criminal Justice State Block Grant to \$6.8 million per year to ensure that ADAMH Boards are able to continue services and supports within the criminal justice involved community.

Psychiatric Hospital Contracting

A concerning provision was added to Section 337.20 in the House omnibus amendment that would prohibit ADAMH Boards from refusing to contract with a hospital that is in good standing with the Department of Behavioral Health. We urge you to remove the proposed changes to 337.20 related to mandating contracting with psychiatric hospitals. (Amendment SC1017)

Data Sharing

ADAMH Boards need to be able to access and share necessary data in order to plan, develop, fund, manage, and evaluate the local system of care. We continue to prioritize efforts and support language that would support the development of robust data sharing relationships between state agencies and local ADAMH Boards.

988 Funding

We appreciate the development of a GRF line item (336-522) to fund the 988 operations. We urge you to ensure the investment in 988 is sufficient to support the growth in demand for the 988 call centers throughout the state. (Amendment SC1170)

Medicaid

ADAMH Boards are invested in the success and stability of the Medicaid program, for the clients we collectively serve and the provider agencies that deliver services. We urge you to enable flexibility and change the “shall” to “may” in the trigger language (ORC section 126.70). Using “may” allows the legislature and administration to retain control over the best strategy to minimize the impact of any cut in the federal matching rate. (Amendment SC1883)

Adult Use Cannabis Tax

We urge you to restore the 25% portion of the 10% tax on Adult-Use Cannabis, as-passed by voters, to be allocated to support community-based prevention, treatment, and recovery supports and direct a portion of those funds to ADAMH Boards to support community services.

Cannabis and Related Drug Misuse Prevention, Education, and Public Awareness Initiatives

The State should utilize existing expertise and knowledge to inform any efforts related to drug misuse, prevention, education, and public awareness initiatives. Any program designed to address prevention, education, and awareness should be led by the Ohio Department of Behavioral Health with consultation and involvement with local ADAMH Boards for the content development and distribution of public awareness activities.

We look forward to the opportunity to partner with the Ohio Department of Behavioral Health, providers, family members, and other stakeholders to continue collaborating to ensure that all Ohioans have access to a complete continuum of care from prevention through recovery supports.

I want to thank you all for your interest in these issues and your ongoing focus on helping Ohioans with mental illness and addiction. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. At this point I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.