



Ohio Senate Finance Committee HB 96

**Testimony of:
Kimberly Fraser, MA, LPCC
Executive Director
Lake County Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services Board
May 28, 2025**

Chairman Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, my name is Kim Fraser, and I am the Executive Director of the Lake County Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services Board. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

The Lake County ADAMHS Board is the 15th largest of Ohio's 50 local ADAMHS Boards, serving a county of approximately 231,000 in northeast Ohio. Through our Board's community outreach, and contracts with 16 mental health and addiction treatment providers, we impact over 15,000 Lake Countians annually with vital clinical services, and an additional 45,000 residents with prevention, education and recovery supports. Our locally driven partnerships with our schools, criminal justice system, health department, chambers of commerce and local government ensure that every dollar we invest in our community is leveraged to the fullest extent. Collaboration, cooperation and braiding of investments means that Lake County has a strong and robust behavioral health system.

As ADAMHS Boards plan for, develop, fund, administer, and contract for services, they work with local individuals in recovery, family members, and other community partners to respond to local needs. Boards are uniquely positioned to rapidly identify changing community needs, respond to crisis situations, and serve as a catalyst for change. In Lake County, for example, we've identified that one of our greatest needs is flexibility to treat individuals experiencing behavioral health crises. Today, too often those individuals end up in our local emergency departments, using costly resources and more importantly, not receiving the appropriate level of care. Our local behavioral health system is working to develop a crisis stabilization center that will better address behavioral health crisis situations, and help individuals stabilize and return home. But to create such a system we need fund sources that are flexible, stable, and designed to help us meet the needs in our communities. The proposed State Block Grants are a strong step in that direction. The design will allow Boards to have more flexibility to develop and support programming to meet our community's specific needs. The proposed State Block Grants will allow me to prioritize and allocate funding where it is needed most. I urge you to maintain the block grant structure and the funding to support the block grants.

Like many counties throughout Ohio, Lake County is also focused on enhancing our capacity to serve individuals involved in the criminal justice system. Locally, that involves building a new, state of the art detention center that will include comprehensive behavioral health services. I urge you to restore the Criminal Justice line within the State Block Grants to the as-introduced funding amount to ensure that all Boards can continue supporting local programming aimed at vital rehabilitation.

Local ADAMHS Boards do not provide direct services, but rather we contract with a network of local organizations to build out the services needed in our local continuum of care. In order to adequately assess, plan, and contract for the local needs of the local citizens, we need to be able to have access to real-time data on behavioral health services, including Medicaid. We need to know what services are occurring, where we are seeing increased demand, where there are gaps, and what the evolving needs are in local communities. We continue to prioritize efforts to promote data sharing between state agencies and local Boards.

Lastly, as you evaluate plans for how to spend the revenue generated by the tax applied to sales of adult use cannabis, I encourage you to restore a portion of those funds to support community-based prevention, treatment, and recovery support services through local ADAMHS Boards. As communities throughout Ohio open dispensaries to sell marijuana products, we must continue to educate our communities, and particularly our youth, about the potential risks associated with marijuana use and how to access help, when it is needed.

Thank you for your continued focus on the behavioral health needs of all Ohioans, including those who live and thrive in Lake County.