

**Amended Substitute House Bill 96
Interested Party Testimony
Submitted by Chuck DeJonckheere
Hamilton County Public Health
Senate Finance Committee
Chairman Jerry C. Cirino
May 30, 2025**



**HAMILTON COUNTY
PUBLIC HEALTH**

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Chairman Cirino, Vice Chairman Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide written testimony on the Amended Substitute House Bill 96, Ohio's biennial operating budget. My name is Chuck DeJonckheere, and I am with Hamilton County Public Health, where I serve as director over our lead poisoning prevention program. I offer testimony on changes passed by the Ohio House to the budget which should concern all of us. The Ohio House eliminated the \$1MM/year Lead Safe Home Fund, and the Lead Abatement Fund has been stripped of meaningful financial support from \$7MM/year to \$250K/year.

Ohio's Lead Poisoning Prevention Programs play a vital role in protecting children and families from the dangers of lead exposure—primarily caused by lead dust from paint in homes built before 1978. These programs are built on a proactive, prevention-first model, with cornerstone initiatives including the Lead Abatement Fund, the Lead Safe Home Fund, and the State Children's Health Insurance Program Lead Program.

There is no safe level of lead in the blood, any lead in the body causes harm. In 2024 alone, more than 5,500 Ohio children were diagnosed with elevated blood lead levels. Cutting these critical funding streams would significantly weaken Ohio's ability to prevent lead poisoning before it occurs.

Beyond protecting children's health, these state dollars unlock additional federal funding. HUD's Lead Hazard Reduction Grants require at least a 10% match—funds from Ohio's program help meet this requirement. This leveraging effect multiplies the impact of every state dollar. For the 2024 grant cycle alone, over \$27MM of federal lead dollars were secured.

Equally important is the quality of the abatement work itself. State funding allows for more permanent and effective lead hazard controls, such as full component removal and replacement, rather than short-term fixes like repainting or stabilization. These durable solutions protect not just the current occupant, but multiple generations of children who will live in these homes.

Restoring funding to Ohio's Lead Poisoning Prevention Program is not just a matter of public health—it's a commitment to the future of our children and communities. It ensures we can prevent lead poisoning before it happens, leverage federal dollars effectively, and invest in permanent, high-quality solutions. The cost of inaction is too high. Let us continue the progress we've made—and not retreat from our responsibility to protect Ohio's families. Please restore the funding for the Lead Abatement Fund, the Lead Safe Home Fund, and preserve the State Children's Health Insurance Program.

Once again, Chairman Cirino and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today on HB 96.



FY 2026 - FY 2027 Appropriations - As Introduced compared to House Passed			All Fund Groups - Detail				H.B. 96 - Main Operating Appropriations Bill					
Detail by Agency			FY 2024	Estimate FY 2025	Introduced FY 2026	Introduced FY 2027	House FY 2026	House FY 2027	FY26 Intro. to Hse.		FY27 Intro. to Hse.	
								\$ Change	% Change	\$ Change	% Change	
DOH Ohio Department of Health												
GRF	440483	Infectious Disease Prevention and Control	\$4,865,139	\$5,265,482	\$4,924,753	\$4,988,016	\$4,924,753	\$4,988,016	\$0	0.00%	\$0	0.00%
GRF	440484	Public Health Technology Innovation	\$1,348,347	\$1,393,000	\$1,409,147	\$1,429,959	\$1,409,147	\$1,429,959	\$0	0.00%	\$0	0.00%
GRF	440485	Health Program Support	\$2,894,000	\$12,525,000	\$14,625,000	\$14,625,000	\$14,437,500	\$14,187,500	(\$187,500)	-1.28%	(\$437,500)	-2.99%
GRF	440495	Toxicology Screenings	\$0	\$0	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$0	0.00%	\$0	0.00%
GRF	440496	Children's Vision Services	\$0	\$0	\$22,550,000	\$17,420,000	\$12,000,000	\$8,000,000	(\$10,550,000)	-46.78%	(\$9,420,000)	-54.08%
GRF	440497	Children's Dental Services	\$0	\$0	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$0	0.00%	\$0	0.00%
GRF	440505	Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs	\$12,610,220	\$12,978,000	\$12,615,000	\$12,615,000	\$13,115,000	\$12,615,000	\$500,000	3.96%	\$0	0.00%
GRF	440507	Targeted Healthcare Services - Over 21	\$871,257	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$0	0.00%	\$0	0.00%
GRF	440527	Lead Abatement	\$7,555,641	\$7,500,000	\$7,048,716	\$7,067,052	\$250,000	\$250,000	(\$6,798,716)	-96.45%	(\$6,817,052)	-96.46%
GRF	440530	Lead-Safe Home Fund Program	\$359,162	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$0	\$0	(\$1,000,000)	-100.00%	(\$1,000,000)	-100.00%
GRF	440672	Youth Homelessness	\$3,508,430	\$3,610,000	\$2,504,474	\$2,505,903	\$2,754,474	\$2,755,903	\$250,000	9.98%	\$250,000	9.98%
GRF	654453	Medicaid - State Health Program Support	\$4,173,007	\$4,639,000	\$4,478,896	\$4,581,836	\$4,478,896	\$4,581,836	\$0	0.00%	\$0	0.00%
General Revenue Fund Subtotal			\$147,637,412	\$95,572,832	\$122,277,778	\$117,974,486	\$101,241,562	\$97,299,934	(\$21,036,216)	-17.20%	(\$20,674,552)	-17.52%
4T40	440603	Child Highway Safety	\$0	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$0	0.00%	\$0	0.00%
Highway Safety Fund Group Subtotal			\$0	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$0	0.00%	\$0	0.00%
4700	440647	Fee Supported Programs	\$23,273,585	\$32,650,080	\$32,650,000	\$33,629,000	\$32,650,000	\$33,629,000	\$0	0.00%	\$0	0.00%
4710	440619	Certificate of Need	\$379,603	\$550,000	\$408,045	\$408,045	\$408,045	\$408,045	\$0	0.00%	\$0	0.00%
4730	440622	Lab Operating Expenses	\$6,392,295	\$8,986,199	\$8,985,000	\$9,254,001	\$8,985,000	\$9,254,001	\$0	0.00%	\$0	0.00%
4770	440627	Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs Audit	\$3,669,295	\$5,033,264	\$4,942,318	\$4,973,075	\$4,942,318	\$4,973,075	\$0	0.00%	\$0	0.00%
4D60	440608	Genetics Services	\$2,883,901	\$3,316,583	\$3,316,583	\$3,416,000	\$3,316,583	\$3,416,000	\$0	0.00%	\$0	0.00%
4F90	440610	Sickle Cell Disease Control	\$772,816	\$850,000	\$850,000	\$850,000	\$850,000	\$850,000	\$0	0.00%	\$0	0.00%
4G00	440636	Heirloom Birth Certificate	\$10,845	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$0	0.00%	\$0	0.00%
4G00	440637	Birth Certificate Surcharge	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$0	0.00%	\$0	0.00%
4L30	440609	HIV Care and Miscellaneous Expenses	\$40,223,847	\$42,697,281	\$52,697,000	\$52,697,000	\$52,697,000	\$52,697,000	\$0	0.00%	\$0	0.00%