



Testimony on HB 96
Ohio Senate Finance Committee – June 5, 2025
Submitted by Lauren Holly, Brain Injury Association of Ohio

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. My name is Lauren Holly, and I serve as the Executive Director of the Brain Injury Association of Ohio (BIAOH). I am here today on behalf of the over 1.6 million Ohioans who have sustained at least one traumatic brain injury (TBI) in their lifetime, and the many more who live with acquired brain injuries due to stroke, overdose, infection, and other causes.

Brain injury is often called a “silent epidemic.” It’s invisible. It doesn’t always show up on a scan. But it can affect everything—memory, decision-making, mood, relationships, the ability to work, and the capacity to live independently. It impacts every sector of our society—healthcare, education, employment, housing, and justice. And it’s more common than most people realize.

According to the Ohio Brain Injury Advisory Committee’s 2019 biennial report, individuals who sustain moderate to severe brain injuries often require lifelong support, and the estimated lifetime cost of these injuries for cases identified in 2014 alone was \$5 billion—a number that includes only medical costs and lost wages, not the emotional, social, and community toll. The real cost is far higher.

At BIAOH, we operate a statewide helpline that connects thousands of Ohioans each year to critical resources. We provide neuro resource facilitation—a proven, evidence-based intervention that helps survivors return to work, to school, and to their communities. We run programs that support caregivers, train providers, educate the public, and help individuals bridge the enormous gap between hospital discharge and independent living.

But that gap is still too wide. Many survivors don’t find us until years after their injury, when they are already isolated, unemployed, or in crisis. And often, we’re forced to send them to other states for the services they need.

That’s why the funding in this budget matters.

The House version of the budget included \$800,000 per year for the brain injury line item—a modest, meaningful step in the right direction. But we are concerned to see that the Senate’s version reduces that amount by \$50,000 per year. We respectfully urge the committee to reconsider.



Even restoring the line item to the House level would make a significant difference. Ideally, we ask for a full \$300,000 increase over the House amount—funding that would allow us to:

- Expand neuro resource facilitation statewide
- Launch transition services to help individuals safely return to the community after hospitalization or incarceration
- Support children returning to school post-injury through programs like BrainSTEPS
- Train mental health providers on how to serve individuals with brain injury
- Increase access in rural and underserved communities, where survivors are often most isolated

Ohio lags behind other states in funding for brain injury services. Many survivors are forced to leave the state to find the support they need. That's unacceptable. We have the expertise and the ability to create programs to meet these needs right here—what we lack is the funding to reach everyone who needs us.

Brain injury can happen to anyone in an instant—regardless of age, income, race, or geography. It changes lives forever. But with the right support at the right time, survivors can recover. They can return to work, to school, to family life. They can thrive. And when they do, it reduces long-term public costs in healthcare, housing, mental health, and criminal justice.

This budget is your opportunity to make that future possible—for thousands of Ohioans. We urge you to invest in it.

Thank you for your time, your service, and your consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.

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