



Ohio School-Based Health Alliance
Senate Finance Committee
House Bill 96 FY26-27 State Operating Budget
Interested Party Testimony
June 5, 2025

Good morning Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Finance Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on Amended Sub Bill 96, the proposed SFY26-27 operating budget.

My name is Katherine Bisset, and I serve as the Director of School-Based Health Care Initiatives with the Ohio School-Based Health Alliance — the only statewide, independent, and nonpartisan organization dedicated to advancing school-based health care in Ohio.

On behalf of our partners, we first want to thank you for your continued commitment to Ohio's students and school-based health centers. We appreciate the Senate's support in including funding for SBHCs in the budget. However, **we respectfully urge the committee to restore this allocation to the originally proposed \$20 million over the biennium.**

This level of funding reflects the current and growing need for school-based health centers and maintains the momentum built through prior state investment. Across Ohio, healthcare providers and schools are working together to build new school-based health center partnerships and plan critical expansions to reach more students — particularly in rural, Appalachian, and underserved regions of the state. These efforts are dependent on this investment.

We also want to express serious concern with the current language on parental consent for school-based health centers. As written, the provision would unintentionally limit who may lawfully consent to care for a child receiving services in a school-based health center. The language contradicts both established practice and current Ohio law.

We respectfully request that the parental consent language be revised to reflect the reality of who may legally and appropriately consent to a child's medical care — including not only parents, but also legal guardians, grandparents acting under Ohio law, or other individuals authorized to provide consent for a child's medical treatment. Without this clarification, children in kinship or foster care, or other lawful caregiving arrangements, could face unnecessary barriers and harmful delays in accessing timely, appropriate care through their school-based health center.

This requested change is the standard already in use in school-based health centers and in the broader healthcare system. This change does not expand authority. Rather, it ensures that no child is denied access to needed care due to technical inconsistencies, and that care



is delivered safely, lawfully, and without disruption to the children and families who rely on school-based health center services. This fix is small but vital. It upholds parental rights, reflects real-life family situations, and preserves safe, lawful access to care for every child.

By restoring full funding and ensuring the consent language reflects existing Ohio law, the General Assembly can safeguard access to school-based care for the students who need it most.

Thank you for your leadership and for your commitment to Ohio's students and families. The Ohio Alliance stands ready to partner with you to ensure every student has access to the care they need. I'm happy to answer any questions.

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