



**Executive Budget Recommendations SFY2026-2027**

**Ohio Senate Health Committee**

May 1, 2025

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the Senate Health Committee, I am Jill Smock, Executive Director of the Ohio Chemical Dependency Professionals (CDP) Board. Thank you for the opportunity to be here today to provide testimony and answer any questions you may have regarding the Board's proposed budget for FY26 and FY27.

The Chemical Dependency Professionals Board licenses the professionals with the specialized knowledge and skills to treat those with substance use disorders, supports those in recovery to obtain employment in the field through license and/or certification opportunities, provides an expansion of scope with a gambling disorder treatment endorsement and allows communities and schools to provide behavioral health prevention services through certified prevention professionals thus supporting the infrastructure of many current initiatives of our state. The public is served further by the Board's ongoing efforts to develop a workforce of appropriate size and skill to serve the needs of all Ohioans.

One of those workforces that has been supporting the initiatives in our state with mental health and substance use disorder recovery is certified peer supporters. A certified peer supporter is someone who has direct lived experience with behavioral health challenges, or someone who has navigated services on behalf of an individual with behavioral health challenges. Certified peer supporters are trained in using their experience to help others impacted by mental illness or substance use disorders successfully recover and maintain recovery. Peer Supporters address critical gaps in the behavioral health workforce and are important members of treatment teams. Ohio offers three Peer Supporter certifications: Adult, Family, and Youth.

Over the last six years, peer supporters have been certified by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. Historically, however, the department certifies provider agencies *not* individual licensees. Given that, and based on feedback from the field, we intend to transfer the certification responsibility for peer supporters to our board. As a licensing board, CDP has an established infrastructure and experience in managing and administering multiple certifications, licenses, and endorsements.

The CDP Board also establishes and enforces professional practice standards and codes of conduct and is responsible for investigating ethical grievances.

Organizationally, the Board employs seven full-time staff members and the Executive Director. Currently the CDP Board provides licensing and certification to over to 14,550 active substance use disorder treatment and prevention professionals.

Our board staff has spent the last two years updating our processes and procedures to enhance efficiency while still providing the quality customer service our certificate and license holders have come to expect. With that said, our budget appropriation accounts for the personnel expenses to account for the transition of all the peer support certifications to our board.

### **Budget**

The Board is a fee-based entity and does not receive any general revenue funding. Revenue is generated by licensing fees, renewal fees, and fees for approval of continuing education providers. OCDPB is part of the 4k90 Fund group. The Board expects increases in our revenue in future years with the addition of the peer support certification and as the demand for our licensed and certified workforce grows.

The Executive budget request aligns with the Board's priorities for the upcoming biennium and its overall strategic plan will:

- Support the current operations of the board and staff.

- Support the transition of the peer support certification from OMHAS to CDP
- Ensure the Board can provide consumer protection through the enforcement of ethical standards.
- Support continuous efforts to improve services and communication, increase efficiencies in the processing of applications and remove unnecessary barriers to licensure and certification.
- Enable the Board to continue its work with colleges, universities, and educational providers to expand professional development and career pathway opportunities.

The expansion of the behavioral health services to respond to the needs of Ohioans in prevention, treatment, and recovery is one of the goals of this administration. CDP understands its role in the availability of services Ohio can provide and it is dependent on the expansion of our workforce. We must be up to the task with reducing license processing time, improving communication, developing resources and technology improvements, ensuring evidence-based education and training for our license and certificate holders all while regulating the profession through accurate and timely ethic investigations.

The Board respectfully requests your support of our proposed budget recommendation of \$1,630,000 for FY26 and \$1,517,000 for FY27. This request includes sufficient funds to cover all operational expenses, hearings, anticipated increases in payroll and health care costs, and cover expenses associated with the transition of the three peer support certifications. These appropriation levels will also assist the Board in maintaining a service level that corresponds with the resources and funding being invested in Ohio's priorities for substance use disorder treatment services, mental health promotion and prevention, and recovery supports that are delivered by the same workforce that we certify, license, and the population we protect.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I will be glad to respond to any questions you may have at this time.