



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**Senate Health Committee
House Bill 96
Robert Kirschner, Chief Philanthropy Officer & Senior Vice President
YMCA of Greater Cleveland
May 13, 2025**

Chair Huffman, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the Senate Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 96. My name is Bob Kirschner, and I am the Chief Philanthropy Officer & Senior Vice President at the YMCA of Greater Cleveland.

The YMCA of Greater Cleveland is a legacy organization that has served the needs of communities across Northeast Ohio since our founding in 1854. As a leader in holistic well-being, the YMCA enhances quality of life through our comprehensive programs and services. In 1993, we launched Y-Haven, an evidence-based addiction treatment facility for men and women who are experiencing homelessness, re-entering the community from incarceration, or recovering from Opioid Use Disorder. With 210 beds available, Y-Haven is the largest residential treatment provider in the State of Ohio. Our addiction treatment outcomes are nearly three times the national average, with 71% of participants completing treatment, 92% engaged in post-residency services, and 70% indicating increased family and social supports. We also proudly report a 0% recidivism rate in 2024.

Incorporating our proven model of success at Y-Haven, we are bringing professional counseling, support groups, and educational workshops on various mental health topics, such as grief and loss and substance use recovery into our eleven YMCA facilities across NE Ohio.

As part of our commitment to mental health, we are working to transform our branches into dedicated “Mental Wellness” hubs. In collaboration with Case Western Reserve University’s Community Innovation Network (CIN), we surveyed our members, explored local community assets, and designed a program to integrate our proven model of mental health services into our facilities. We have appointed a behavioral health manager to oversee and implement a pilot program at two of our eleven branches – Hillcrest Family YMCA in Lyndhurst and the Warrensville Heights Family YMCA. A licensed social worker is providing professional counseling, support groups, and mental wellness workshops to YMCA members and the broader community. The response to these services has been overwhelmingly positive, and we hope to expand this program to all our branches across Northeast Ohio.

This work was made possible as a result of private foundation and donor support. While the wellness hubs are intended to be self-sustaining once fully operational, we ask the committee to consider supporting an appropriation of \$350,000 each fiscal year to support build out of this programming.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome any questions you may have.