

**Ohio Senate Finance Committee  
Testimony of: Scott Rasmus, Executive Director  
Butler County Mental Health Board  
June 10, 2015**

**Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chair Coley, Ranking Member Skindell, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, good morning.** My name is Scott Rasmus, I am the Executive Director of the Butler County Mental Health Board.

I wanted to put some meaning behind some mental health statistics related to Butler County. It is well known that the one year prevalence of mental illness is about 20% of the population. In Butler County, which has an approximate population of 370,000 according to the 2010 US Census, that is about **75,000 residents** have a mental illness in any given year. A 2013 Health Survey funded by Interact for Health & BCMHB indicated that mental illness in Butler County **may be as high as 30% of the population or 110,000 residents** which is not only higher than our tristate region but also the nation as a whole. Furthermore, studies indicate that only about 1/3 of the population seek treatment and 2/3 do not because of lack of awareness, lack of education, and the fear/stigma associated with mental illness. Considering this, **only about 25,000-35,000 people seek treatment and 50,000-75,000 people do not in Butler County depending is you consider the 20% or 30% numbers.** To my knowledge, I cannot think of another illness where 2 out of 3 people who experience an illness endure it without seeking treatment like this. Furthermore, Butler County is one of the fastest growing counties in Ohio with a population growth of 1% a year during the first decade of this century. Each year between **750-1,000 new residents will experience a mental illness** on top of the annual prevalence numbers I have already mentioned. Obviously, similar calculations can be done to represent other counties in Ohio. With this in mind, the bottom line here is that the mental health needs of Butler County, Ohio residents are great and growing each and every year. This is why **flat or decreased mental health and substance abuse funding is of major to concern to all of us.**

More specifically, Butler County residents have benefited significantly from state budget line Item 507 and Line Item 421 dollars over the last 2 years or more. In

FY 2014 these 2 funds brought to our county **\$1.8 million dollars to support & expand key programs** such as our mental health Crisis Hotline, Mobile Crisis Team, and Step Down/Step Up Residential Facility with the latter serving as a diversion program to the already overburdened state hospital system. In FY 2014, these 3 programs highlighted much needed crisis and residential **services collectively making up \$1.2 million of the \$1.8 million allocated to our county through these line items. In FY 2015, both these funds together resulted in an allocation of \$600,000 from the state.** In FY 2016, the complete loss of the 507 line item with significant redirection or reduction in the current 421 line item will leave very little state funds to support these programs. **These slated reductions are happening while our Mental Health Crisis Hotline is fielding over 5,000 calls a year and our mobile crisis team addressing 1,600 contacts a year. Youth crisis contacts are increasing significantly and our Step Down/Step Up Residential facility is operating near its 15 bed capacity on a daily basis to support our state hospital system and keep our residents close to their homes.** It is important to note many of these services are **non-Medicaid services** because they are residential and it is often difficult to sign crisis clients up for Medicaid when they are calling in on a hotline anonymously or experiencing a crisis even with follow up contacts.

I want ask for **\$30 million dollars in Line Item 421 for the SFY16-17 budget** to continue the good work we are doing in Butler County with the programming that was started two years ago through these state funding sources. As you can see, the challenge is significant and the growth continues year after year. I want to thank you for this opportunity and I petition your support for these funds.