

Ohio Senate Finance Committee
Testimony of: Susan Shultz, Executive Director
Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Services Board of Adams, Lawrence, and Scioto Counties
June 10, 2015

Chairman Oelslager, Ranking member Skindell, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, good morning. My name is Sue Shultz and I am the Executive Director of the Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Services Board of Adams, Lawrence, and Scioto Counties. I appreciate the opportunity to provide this testimony.

My three-county Board area serves a rural area of Southern Ohio and we also do not have a levy. Our communities have been hit hard by the opiate epidemic while also experiencing high rates of unemployment - Adams County is currently the second highest in the state at 9.9% and Scioto County is seventh highest in the state at 8.9% unemployment.

Our Board, in conjunction with The Counseling Center opened, the Crisis/Detox Center that offers Ambulatory Detox and Mental Health Crisis Services, as well as a Crisis Hotline Service, to Adams, Lawrence, and Scioto County residents. The Crisis Center began operations on January 15, 2014. Between July 1, 2014 to April 30, 2015, 391 clients were admitted, including 182 clients with mental illness, 159 clients with addiction, and 50 clients with dual-diagnosis. Clients present at the Crisis Center in the midst of a mental health crisis, in desperate need of detox services, and sometimes both. We are serving mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, neighbors, and friends and we're serving them as close to home as we can. Between July 1, 2014 to April 30, 2015, the Crisis Hotline has received 7,180 calls. The crisis hotline provides information about services, offers supportive conversations, and responds to crisis calls (suicidal, addiction, emotional distress, etc.). The total budget for operations of the Crisis Center is \$826,319, which consists of various fund sources. The budget includes the \$441,161 of the 507 and Hot Spot funds allocated to our Board area. While some of the counseling services provided by our crisis team are covered by Medicaid, the room and board, meals, transportation, residential detoxification, and costs associated with ensuring 24/7/365 staffing of the unit are not. Furthermore, our hotline that provides critical support to individuals, families, and local partners is funded by our state allocation. Without an additional investment, the Crisis Center would have to close down. This will result in us reverting back to our old, inefficient system of providing crisis services through unnecessary emergency room utilization, increased hospitalization rates, and increased jail stays.

My Board area does not have a levy. The same is true for my colleague and neighbor serving Gallia, Jackson, and Meigs Counties, where they are facing a similar situation with their local Crisis Stabilization Unit. As a result, we rely on our allocations from OhioMHAS. Medicaid expansion has been beneficial and has allowed some Boards to divert funds to other services in the community, but without a local levy, we have had minimal funds to divert without further eroding our already fragile service system.

I have seen the incredible benefit of the Crisis/Detox Center and our hotline and I don't want to go back to the days where our only options are to send people to the state hospital or the local emergency room. I am asking that you restore \$30 million to the OhioMHAS 421 line item to help my Board and Boards in a similar situation continue to provide access to critical and life-saving services to citizens in our communities. These funds would be used by my Board to continue funding our Crisis/Detox Center as well as provide stabilizing recovery supports that are not covered by Medicaid, including: housing, peer support, transportation, and more.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. I'm happy to take any questions you may have.