

**Ohio Senate  
Senate Finance Committee  
June 11, 2015**

Chairman Oelslager, Ranking Minority Member Skindell, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, my name is Jody Demo- Hodgins and I am the executive director of the Crawford—Marion ADAMH Board. I appreciate the opportunity to talk to you about the Addiction Treatment Pilot Project (ATPP) in Crawford County and share with you the challenges we have around opiate addiction.

Crawford County was one of the counties selected for ATPP. We started this effort with Ohio Supreme Court Training in the fall of 2013. Maryhaven is our provider partner for this project. Services started in December of 2013 with potential clients receiving assessments at the county jail and in the community. I am here today to share a snapshot of the first year.

Addiction is a chronic disease and while it cannot be cured, it can be managed and people can recover. As you well know, this is a Medication Assisted Treatment pilot. There are three equally important parts to this form of treatment: Medication; Counseling; and Support from family and friends. These three parts work together to aid in the recovery process. As of the end of March this year, 49 individuals were or had been enrolled in ATPP, with 21 being the current number of active clients in Crawford County. In late January, the first class of 11 graduated from drug court. Twenty-two percent of those individuals received Vivitrol or Revia and forty-one percent received Buprenorphine. Seven percent received no medication and thirty-six percent transitioned from medication to no medication as their treatment progressed. It is important to note that at its core, ATPP is about evidenced based, clinical treatment delivered by alcohol and other drug treatment professionals. The treatment retention rate for this project is 89% - significantly better than typical AOD treatment retention. Fifty-three percent of participants were employed by the end of March. Eighty-two percent of participants did not recidivate during their tenure in the ATPP project.

The overall goals for this program were:

- To provide MAT to justice involved individuals to help manage their addiction so that the benefits of recovery could move them forward.
- To help reduce the craving for opiates so that their brains could have clarity. And -
- To provide tools to increase compliance and support sobriety.

As Medicaid Expansion became available, the provider worked diligently to help eligible individuals enroll. When individuals became employed, ATPP funds helped bridge the gap to allow for continuation of MAT and treatment as they became eligible for health insurance.

In the last 8 years, the issue I deal with on a daily basis is around that of opiate addiction. In the past three weeks – Marion County has been especially hard hit with opiate deaths and overdoses – with 35 overdoses in a 7 day period. Not a day goes by that I don't talk to an individual or family struggling with opiate based addiction or someone who has lost a loved one to an overdose. In many ways, we feel as if we are drowning in opiate related problems. It has left me to wonder why we can't recognize that addiction is a disease. We persist in thinking that because someone makes the choice to use drugs for the first time that each use after is a choice. We know that family history, early use, trauma and mental illness are risk factors for addiction. Most drug use begins when people are young - from 12 to 20. And yet, we stigmatize them for the rest of their lives for actions that started a disease in motion. Using drugs is not about flawed character or lack of willpower it's about stress, trauma, genetic predisposition, mild or serious mental illness, and use at an early age or some combination of these things. It's a serious disease that is cracking the foundation of this nation, this state and the two counties in which I live and work. The ATPP project has given us the opportunity to treat addiction as a disease by providing resources to deliver evidence based treatment in a timely way. There is no one way for people to recover and some drugs of choice - like heroin -benefit from the use of medication that can help reverse the pathology of the disease.

Please know that your support of funding for recovery housing has been important to our system of care. Just last week, we opened a recovery house for women with another to follow in July for men. We believe that the ability to create a continuum of services will aid in the successful transition from addiction to recovery.

Illnesses move into the mainstream only when there has been a scientific discovery or political pressure to do so. Heroin is crippling our communities - and the answer lies in well-rounded treatment that includes - Medication; Counseling; and Support from family and friends. This is what the ATPP project is all about. Members of the Senate Finance Committee, I strongly encourage you to support the proposal to continue ATPP in the original counties and add others across the state. The good work being done in drug courts can be repeated across the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions that you might have.