



Daniel Lettenberger-Klein
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

OFFICERS

Susan L. Gragel
PRESIDENT

Robert Brandon
VICE PRESIDENT

Daniela Paez
SECRETARY

Aaron Marks
TREASURER

Tim McErlean
IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Keith Karakul
EX-OFFICIO

EMERITUS DIRECTOR
Michael Gallagher

DIRECTORS

Richard Bialosky
Ellen Connally
William Denihan
Rick Doody
Thomas Gerson
Earle C. Horton
Annie H. Hubbard
Jeff Knight
George Latcheran
Kenneth S. Lurie
Theresa Manley
John F. O'Brien
Patrick D. Quinn
Susan O. Scheutzow
Albert E. R. Schneider III
Tom Wasson
Phyllis Webb
Mike Wise
Oliver S. Zeltner

SB 30 Proponent Testimony
Senate Health Committee
February 10, 2021

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Senate Health Committee. Thank you for allowing me to give testimony on Senate Bill 30.

Last week the Stella Maris campus paid respects to Robert L. Robert lost his battle with the disease of addiction. Robert successfully completed Residential Treatment just a couple of months before. He returned with the intent of reengaging in services, but his disease guided him elsewhere. We wish this were a unique situation.

The auditorium on the Stella Maris campus, that has been housing our Partial Hospitalization Program, has seats marked off to accomplish appropriate social distancing. The tape that marks these seats each is labeled with the first name of someone from the Stella Maris family that was lost to this illness. It is a stark reminder to all that enter that room.

It is not new that we recognize these losses. It is that so often, this recognition is in silence. The stigma surrounding addiction too often shrouds the grieving in shame.

August 31st has been observed worldwide as Overdose Awareness Day for years. Stella Maris supports and applauds Senator Dolan and the co-sponsors of this bill for embracing and formalizing this observance at the State level. At a time when the pandemic is complicating recovery, it is even more important to raise awareness. In Cuyahoga County, we have seen overdoses increase dramatically since the COVID-19 pandemic began. At Stella Maris, we have also seen an increase in individuals with long-term sobriety relapsing and coming in for treatment.

Senate Bill 30 is an opportunity for Ohio to bring these preventable losses to light, to reduce the stigma surrounding this illness, to support families that are suffering, and to bring awareness not only to the epidemic, but also the miracle of recovery. We at Stella Maris know that dialogue and awareness save lives, thank you for helping to be a part of this mission.

Thank you, Chairman Huffman, for allowing me to provide proponent testimony today on SB 30. I am more than happy to answer any questions of the committee.

