



May 6, 2021

TO: Senate Health Committee
FROM: David Maywhoor, Executive Director
DATE: May 6, 2021
RE: HB110 Creates Appropriations for FY 2022 – 2023

Chairman Huffman, Vice-Chairman Antani, Ranking Minority Member Antonio and members of the Senate Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB110. I am sorry I cannot be with you in person today and hope that you will have a chance to review my testimony.

I will be as brief in written form as I would have been in person because I know these times require conciseness and clarity of purpose.

The mission of the Ohio Public Health Association (OPHA) is to be the inclusive voice for Public Health, to proactively advocate for policies that reduce health disparities and empower all people to achieve their optimal health, and to advance the practice of public health in Ohio. Our broad membership includes employees of local health departments (LHD), academicians, epidemiologists, dentists, nurses, those who have retired, committing their career to the field and those just entering the public health field.

This past year brought much disruption to the known ways our public health system works to protect the health and safety of Ohio's communities. While most Ohio industries sent their workers home to be furloughed or for the lucky ones to work virtually, public health workers were required to get even closer to the dangerous coronavirus which essentially shut Ohio down. They were required to do the COVID19 testing; required to find the potentially infected through disease investigation and contact tracing; required to set up and run local vaccination operations; and finally required to face the angry virus doubters and anti-vaxxers. As essential workers they walked into the danger every day, and it is time they are recognized. We believe the following requests will help in that process:

Adequate funding to support Ohio's Public Health and Safety System

- We are asking that adequate funding allowing LHDs to provide what is known as Foundational Public Health Services (FPHS) for equitable distribution across the state. A synopsis of a 2019 report on FPHS published by the Ohio Public Health Partnership is attached for your review.

As noted in the report and based on October 2019 levels of spending an estimated additional investment of \$7.94 per capita will be needed to close the attainment gap and ensure adequate provision of the FPHS in communities across Ohio. This would require a \$93 million sustained, annual investment.

Supporting Health and Equity In All Policies

- Data from infections, hospitalizations and deaths from COVID-19 have highlighted disparities in health outcomes that have existed for decades. Higher numbers of Ohioans stricken and killed from the virus come from communities of color. We fear that new data will indicate that these same communities are not receiving the vaccine at the same rate as other communities. We need to create novel and flexible community-based approaches to combat these disparities.

We need flexible funding for local health departments and communities to implement programs which will eliminate these gaps and provide opportunities for investment in community health improvement plans.

- We recommend inclusion in this bill a needed and critical review of policies and equity impacts. This would require an investment of an estimated \$1,000,000 to implement a Health and Equity in All Policies review of laws and rules to determine if the impact on the health and equity of our communities. (See attached Policy Matters paper)

OPHA stands ready to work with its broad network of partners to assure the implementation and accountability for these public dollars. We would be happy to discuss these recommendations in greater detail should there be interest.

Thank you for your time and attention.