



Matt Dolan
State Senator, 24th District

Senate Building
Rm. 127
Columbus, Ohio 43215
Phone: 614.466.8056
dolan@ohiosenate.gov

Nickie J. Antonio
State Senator, 23rd District

Senate Building
Rm. 050
Columbus, Ohio 43215
Phone: 614.466.5123
antonio@ohiosenate.gov

SB 240 Sponsor Testimony
Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee
January 22, 2020

Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee. Thank you for allowing us to give testimony on Senate Bill 240. The purpose of this bill is to clearly define what a crisis nursery is and to provide a path to those who wish to open and operate in the future.

Prior to 2017, there were two crisis care nurseries operating in Ohio, Providence House in Cleveland and Blessing House in Lorain. With the addition of Brigid's Path in Dayton, the three crisis care nurseries play a key role in early intervention services that aim to keep families together, support healthy child development and reduce foster care placement. They are designed to help Ohio's most vulnerable population while saving tens of millions of dollars in foster care costs to our state.

Crisis care nurseries offer free, voluntary and temporary emergency shelter to children newborn through twelve years old while they work with families to overcome an active family crisis. With the opioid epidemic sweeping Ohio, more crisis care nurseries could be licensed to meet the unique needs of the community in which they operate.

Creation of licensures

This legislation will update the crisis care nurseries code section and licensures with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. In addition, two new sub licensures will be created to allow for uniqueness in care and consistency among any new crisis care nurseries that wish to open their doors.

The first is the "Family Preservation Center" subcategory which defines crisis nurseries that have the primary purpose to preserve families through preteen foster care diversion practices and programs

The second subcategory is "Residential Infant Care Center" that will be used by certified crisis nurseries that have the primary purpose of providing services for infants born drug-exposed.

This bill also makes the following changes:

- Increase the time that children can stay at a crisis nursery from 60 days to 90 days to accommodate parent inpatient treatment and/or secure affordable housing for homeless families;

- Permit administrative staff, interns and volunteers to count toward staff ratios for up to three hours in emergency situations if they have received training and are supervised by staff;
- Permit volunteers and contracted transportation providers that have passed a background check and received training to transport children when needed;
- Include crisis nurseries in the SORN residency restrictions already established for schools and day-care centers;
- Specify that placement of a child by a PCSA at a crisis nursery will be entered as a respite or transitional stay under the statewide automated child welfare information system (SACWIS), which is housed within JFS. This is important for local county children services departments that may not otherwise want to utilize services with a crisis nursery as the stays are often short and could have negative consequences with federal funding; and
- Prohibits the department from allowing waivers to requirements

Thank you, Chairman Burke, for allowing us to provide sponsor testimony today on SB 240. I welcome any questions from the committee.