



Ohio House Behavioral Health and Recovery Supports Committee

Proponent Testimony on Sub. HB 523

Kimberly Fraser
Executive Director
Lake County ADAMHS Board
May 19, 2022

Chairwoman Carruthers, Vice-Chair Pavliga, and members of the House Behavioral Health and Recovery Supports Committee thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of Sub HB 523. My name is Kim Fraser and I am the Executive Director of the Lake County ADAMHS Board. I am also the Chair of the OACBHA ORC 340 Workgroup.

Today, you will hear from several individuals about many of the detailed provisions included within Sub HB 523 and why these changes are critical. I want to spend a few minutes providing some more background about these changes and about the section of revised code that governs Ohio's Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Boards, ORC 340.

ORC 340 is the guiding statute for Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Boards in Ohio. This section of code has been tinkered with in recent years, but it is largely unchanged from when it was initially enacted in the late 80s. The language was originally crafted in an effort to establish a community mental health system and a community addiction treatment system. As times have changed and the local systems of care have evolved, changes to this statute have not kept pace with the world around us.

In the last 30 plus years, we've seen tremendous advancements in the science of treatment for mental illness and substance use disorders. We know more about these diseases and the needs of individuals experiencing mental illness and substance use disorders. We have a better understanding of recovery and the importance of recovery support services. We have more insight into the critical role of prevention, and we know more about what works and what doesn't.

Additionally, our systems are financed differently than they were in the late 80s. The Medicaid program plays a larger role in funding for treatment services. Private insurance is also more engaged as a result of parity laws and other regulations focusing on ensuring access to care. State and federal grants look different now than they did in the past. And we have far more communities that have local levy funds supporting their community mental health and addiction system.

A lot has changed, but major sections of the governing statute for ADAMH Boards have not kept pace with the changes in the community. In the last couple of years, the members of OACBHA have begun to see areas of critical need for modernization in the authorizing language for ADAMH Boards. We pulled together the ORC 340 Workgroup with the specific goal of combing through the language to identify key areas in need of update. We worked to highlight and prioritize areas of needed change.

The group worked for over two years and developed a series of recommendations for areas of improvement in the code. Several of these provisions, and all of our key priority areas, are included in Sub HB 523. It's time for modernization of this statute. We fully support the changes in Sub HB 523 that:

- Modernize the composition of Governing Boards, prioritizing the voices of individuals with lived experience and their families and allowing for different sizes of Boards to meet different community needs.
- Revise the contracting language to remove the 120-day notice requirement and put in place a provision allowing the parties of the contract to agree upon terms and processes for early termination of the contract.
- Ensure that Boards are able to be the best stewards of taxpayer dollars by clarifying language that Boards can utilize a selection process for local service contracts.
- Requires Boards and state agencies to work together to enter into data-sharing agreements and arrangements to ensure that we are planning for and funding local continuums of care with a complete picture of the currently available services and supports, and a better understanding of the gaps and needs of the community.
- Engages Boards to provide input and recommendations to OhioMHAS regarding initial and renewal applications for certifications and investigations.

We are also supportive of the additional changes in the bill related to tax levy statute clarification, removal of the wait list section, and a removal of the outdated reference to opiate hub reporting.

In the last 30 years, we have seen a lot of change in our local communities. We continue to see an increase in demand for mental health and addiction services. We know we have unmet needs in many of our communities. I encourage you to support Sub HB 523 to help us modernize revised code so that we can continue to modernize our local systems to further our collective efforts to provide recovery-oriented, community-based prevention, treatment, and support services for all Ohioans in need.

Madam Chairwoman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. At this time, I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.