



## **Ohio House Behavioral Health and Recovery Supports Committee**

Proponent Testimony on Sub. HB 523

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Chairwoman Carruthers, Vice-Chair Pavliga, and members of the House Behavioral Health and Recovery Supports Committee, thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of Sub HB 523. My name is Bill Holt, and I am the Executive Director of the Jefferson County Prevention and Recovery Board.

House Bill 523 is critically important to strengthening local influence in our behavioral health systems. We stand at a crossroads between two paths; on one hand, we have local oversight and management of our behavioral health care, and on the other hand, we have the path towards continued and ever-expanding dictation by Federal rules and regulations of how services are delivered in our communities. I believe very strongly that local communities best understand how to overcome the local issues that we face. While all of Ohio and the nation struggle to address the opioid epidemic, the solutions that work in Washington are not likely to apply to Steubenville. If you agree with the idea of empowering local government to solve local problems, then support of this bill is essential. Massive changes are occurring across behavioral health, and if local boards lack the tools to interact on an even playing field with giant insurance companies, we will be marginalized to the point of irrelevance. By allowing information to be shared between state and local entities, delivery of services can be improved while also saving the taxpayer money. Without the information and collaboration that this bill provides, local tax dollars could be subject to fraud and waste. I urge the Committee to act on this bill with all possible haste.

Madam Chairwoman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. Should you have any questions, I would be happy to answer them.