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Chair Pavliga, Vice Chair White, Ranking Member Brewer, and My colleagues on the House Behavioral Health Committee, thank you for giving me and Representative Hillyer the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 249.

House Bill 249 concerns the involuntary hospitalization of individuals suffering from mental illness subject to a court order. Under current law, individuals may only be involuntarily hospitalized if they present immediate danger to themselves or others, or if they cannot meet basic needs on their own.

Our legislation would make it possible to hospitalize individuals who are suffering from severe mental illness but do not necessarily meet the requirements established under current law in Ohio. By establishing this psychiatric deterioration standard, the court system could intervene *before* an individual exhibits violent or suicidal tendencies or is unable to meet survival needs. Early intervention can reduce an individual's risk of societal consequences like arrest, incarceration, homelessness, or job loss.

This bill encourages judges to consider the likelihood of further psychiatric deterioration if an individual were to go without treatment. People with mental illness should not have to be criminalized in order to get the help that they need.

Last, but certainly not least, this legislation establishes a smooth legal framework for an individual's transition from involuntary hospitalization to outpatient mental health treatment.

Thank you for giving me and Representative Hillyer the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 249. I am open for questions and points of clarification in regards to this legislation.