

Dear Senator Matt Dolan and members of the Senate Finance Committee:

Middle and high school students in Ohio face a variety of threats to their health and wellbeing. The programs that Ohio Adolescent Health Centers provide are a life-line to help students make and keep healthy decisions. The programs cover Ohio Health Mandates in Section 3313.60 Prescribed Curriculum, meet the requirements of the Ohio Parents Right to Know Act and items in the Ohio Save Students Act.

Students need to know the risks they incur as a result of not avoiding risky behavior and how to make informed healthy choices to ensure they reach their potential. Students learn from an instructor who has specific and enhanced knowledge of state mandated topics.

The programs give students valuable information for life decisions and make them think about their future. The programs work with social emotional curriculum, meeting Social Emotional Learning initiatives as well as Family Consumer Science Standards; they also meet learning objectives by relating information back to the National Health Education Standards. Teachers agree that risk avoidance topics need to be taught and that it helps students see that people in the community are promoting the same message the school is. This meets Ohio Standards for Teachers 6.4 - teachers collaborate effectively with the local community and community agencies to promote a positive environment for student learning. Thinking is promoted and consequences analyzed to help students become productive, independent citizens.

The programs have been in operation for thirty-five years; a teacher who invites the program says that it hasn't disappointed in eighteen years. Programs mirror school curriculum and are a perfect fit. They are based on real life and the challenges of growing up and making

the best choices. Students benefit from receiving factual information about drugs, tobacco, alcohol and sex. The programs highlight topics that a lot of parents don't have with their kids.

Serious issues of dating violence prevention are addressed with decision making models to help them make healthy decisions. Teaching how the brain works in response to risk behaviors is helpful to students in understanding addiction. Ohio students benefit from: risk avoidance, healthy relationship, responsible decision making, STI/STD facts, peer pressure refusal skills, and dating violence prevention education.

This testimony is written based on 2022-23 school year actual teacher comments. Finally, here is a teacher quote from May 2023: "I feel this is an excellent program that is well organized and up to date to help students understand many of the issues they face as young adults. I hope you will continue to provide this service to our students."

We humbly ask that this teachers wishes be fulfilled and for the Ohio Adolescent Health Centers line in the budget to be resubmitted and approved for 2023-2025. Thank you.