

COALITION FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES
ADVOCATING FOR QUALITY MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES



August 15, 2019

The Honorable Larry Obhof
President, Ohio Senate
Statehouse
Columbus, Ohio 43215

The Honorable Larry Householder
Speaker, Ohio House
77 S. High Street, 14th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear President Obhof and Speaker Householder:

The Coalition for Healthy Communities recognizes and appreciates the substantial funding increases that the Ohio General Assembly included in the recently passed biennial budget related to behavioral health for children, youth and adults. We also applaud Governor Mike DeWine for promptly outlining a plan to reduce the likelihood of another tragic loss of life such as that which occurred in Dayton last week. The solutions he outlines with regard to prevention, early identification and treatment are spot on.

With medication, treatment and other support services, those with severe mental illness and addiction disorders are no more dangerous than anyone else, capable of leading happy, productive lives. Without treatment, their prospects worsen. Those with untreated severe mental illness and/or addiction disorders experience a host of negative consequences. Many take their own lives. Others die early as a result of other untreated chronic health conditions. Others find themselves caught in the revolving door of homelessness, hospitalization, and incarceration. And, although very few, others become entwined in what otherwise may have been a preventable tragedy.

Knowing that behavioral health is treatable, and that entire communities experience the positive effects of having healthy citizens, we would strongly encourage the General Assembly to fix the still existing shortcomings in the mental health and substance use systems, so that tragedies like this do not occur again. We urge you to make Governor DeWine's proposal your first order of business when you return to session.

Sincerely,

Terry Russell, Co-Chair
Coalition for Healthy Communities

Marcie Seidel, Co-Chair
Coalition for Healthy Communities

cc: Governor Mike DeWine
Lori Criss; Director, Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services

Coalition for Healthy Communities

Buckeye Art Therapy Association
Mental Health & Addiction Advocacy Coalition
Mental Health America of Ohio
Multiethnic Advocates for Cultural Competence
National Alliance on Mental Illness of Ohio
Ohio Alliance of Recovery Providers
Ohio Association of Child Caring Agencies
Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities
Ohio Citizen Advocates for Addiction Recovery
Ohio Council for Behavioral Health & Family Services Providers
Ohio Counseling Association
Ohio Disability Rights Law and Policy Center, Inc.
Ohio Psychiatric Physicians Association
Ohio Psychological Association
Ohio School Psychologists Association
Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation
Prevention Action Alliance
Treatment Advocacy Center
Universal Health Care Action Network of Ohio