



MEMORANDUM

TO: Ohio House of Representatives, Community and Family Advancement Committee
Representative Tim Derickson, Chairman

CC: Representative Marlene Anielski

FROM: Tracy Plouck, Director

DATE: March 17, 2015

RE: Support for House Bill 28

The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) is committed to working with other state and local agencies, organizations and individuals to save lives. Local suicide prevention coalitions have been formed in many counties, and a number of initiatives are currently underway to raise awareness, eliminate stigma, promote suicide prevention as a public health issue and increase help-seeking behavior.

Suicide Statistics

Suicide has become a significant public health epidemic. In the state of Ohio, 1,534 suicides were recorded in 2012. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recorded suicide as the leading cause of death for Ohioans 10-64 years of age and the second leading cause of death for Ohioans 15-34 years of age. This problem has continued to escalate by the death rate from suicide increasing by 27% between 2000 and 2010. These just aren't statistics - these are people. These are sons, daughters, and future leaders of our great state that are not living up to their full potential.

Suicide Prevention Initiatives

OhioMHAS established a partnership with the Ohio Foundation for Suicide Prevention to develop a strategic plan for suicide prevention in Ohio. The foundation is a grassroots organization of medical, mental health and public health professionals, faith-community members and advocates who are dedicated to preventing suicide by raising awareness and promoting well-being.

The proposed budget (HB 64) includes \$1 million annually for suicide prevention. OhioMHAS seeks to strengthen statewide efforts to prevent the avoidable tragedy of suicide through education and awareness, screening of individuals at high risk, pharmacotherapy, psychotherapy, and follow-up care after a suicide attempt.

Support for HB 28

HB 28 will provide the necessary resources for an at-risk population. Too often students do not know how to seek help, resulting in a tragedy. HB 28 will tackle this issue by ensuring the essential services are available and by educating students about mental health topics, including available depression and suicide prevention resources. OhioMHAS commends Representative Anielski for her tireless efforts to help save lives and urges your support for HB 28.

Thank you very much for your consideration. Please feel free to contact OhioMHAS' Legislative Liaison, Stephen Wilson, with any further questions.