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**Statement of Teresa Lampl, Interim-CEO of the Ohio Council of Behavioral Health & Family Services Providers (The Ohio Council) on Governor Mike DeWine's Budget Announcement**

The Ohio Council of Behavioral Health and Family Services Providers applauds Governor Mike DeWine's bold vision, strong leadership and steadfast commitment to investing in Ohio's future and the health and wellbeing of all Ohioans. We applaud the DeWine Administration's willingness to listen to stakeholders, recognize and understand the serious challenges facing the state and address them head on even when the benefits may not be realized until well into the future.

Governor DeWine's budget proposal effectively responds in various ways to the addiction and mental health public health crisis facing our state, and we are very pleased the Governor is seeking a robust investment in behavioral health services across the continuum of care. Indeed, today's budget announcement includes specific resources to expand prevention, treatment and crisis stabilization services, and directs additional resources to child welfare services to intervene earlier and help children and families impacted by addiction and mental illness sooner.

Today's children are tomorrow's adults, parents, community leaders, workforce and the key to our state's economic success. The Ohio Council commends the Governor's budget proposals that will expand evidence-based home visiting services and facilitate greater access to school-based health and behavioral health services. We also enthusiastically applaud the Department of Medicaid's initiatives that will help new moms in recovery bond and connect with their babies, promote telehealth services in schools and expand coverage for services for children on the autism spectrum.

The Ohio Council looks forward to working with the DeWine Administration, the Ohio General Assembly and interested stakeholders during the budget process to advance sound policy and effective strategies that support greater access to community behavioral health services.

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*The Ohio Council of Behavioral Health & Family Services Providers is a statewide trade and advocacy organization representing 150 private businesses that deliver addiction treatment and prevention, mental health, and family services throughout Ohio.*