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January 31, 2023

Statement of Teresa Lampl, CEO of the Ohio Council of Behavioral Health and Family Services Providers on Governor Mike DeWine's State of the State Address

I enthusiastically applaud Governor DeWine for his strong leadership and bold vision for Ohio's mental health and substance use disorder system of care, and his commitment to invest in the health and economic wellbeing of Ohio's children, families, and communities so they have the tools to succeed and ability to thrive.

Governor DeWine's message is clear – his administration intends to fulfill promises of the past by partnering with lawmakers to grow the behavioral health workforce, address stigma and mental health insurance discrimination head on, and develop and strengthen the infrastructure that is necessary to support a high quality, accessible and effective behavioral health system of care throughout Ohio.

The important policy initiatives and key funding priorities referenced in the Governor's State of the State Address that focus on prevention and school-based services; developing crisis services and the implementation of 9-8-8; enhancing resources to support the behavioral health workforce; and investing in research and innovation, will pay dividends far into the future. These investments are also critical drivers for the economic health of Ohio's communities as today's children are tomorrow's students, workforce, and entrepreneurs.

The Ohio Council looks forward to working with the DeWine Administration and lawmakers during this budget process to capitalize on great opportunities, advance sound policies, and direct resources to support community behavioral health providers, and most importantly the Ohioans seeking mental health and substance use disorder services.

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About The Ohio Council: *The Ohio Council of Behavioral Health & Family Services is a statewide trade and advocacy association representing more than 160 community-based, private businesses that provide prevention, addiction treatment, mental health, and family services. For more information, visit www.theohiocouncil.org.*