



Scott S. Osiecki
CY20-21 Budget Testimony
Cuyahoga County Council Committee of the Whole
Thursday, October 17, 2019
County Council Chambers – 4th Floor | 1:00 PM

- Good afternoon. I'm Scott Osiecki, the CEO of the ADAMHS Board of Cuyahoga County.
- Thank you Council President Brady and all of the Council Members for allowing me to speak with you about the CY20-21 allocation to the ADAMHS Board.
- First of all, we are grateful that the budget County Executive Budish submitted to the Council does not include a decrease in funding to the Board.
- I also want to mention that through a partnership with County Executive Budish and Council President Brady, the ADAMHS Board was allocated about \$10 million from the first of the Opioid Lawsuit Settlements – for which we are extremely grateful.
- This money, although one-time, helps us fill some of the gaps in addiction treatment and recovery supports for the time-being. And we are looking forward to a continued collaboration with future settlements.
- In June, I requested that the Council increase the ADAMHS Board allocation by \$7.8 million and make that part of the Board's base funding from the Health & Human Services levies.
- It was suggested by some that we could reallocate funding from the lawsuit to meet the needs of that request. I wish I could, but we are using that funding to expand services.
- However, I'm standing before you today to lower my original request and ask for \$5.1 million in additional funding to enhance our services for mental health, especially for crisis and housing for individuals living with mental illness.

Crisis Services

- We are asking for \$2 million in additional funding to bolster our Crisis Services provided by Frontline, specifically the 24-hour Suicide Prevention, Mental Health & Addiction Crisis, Information and Referral Line and the Mobile Crisis Team.
- This is an urgent ask as Cuyahoga County has seen the largest number of deaths by suicide since 1985, with 211 lives lost in 2018 and more than 194 deaths so far in 2019.
- It's important to remember that Crisis Services are available to every resident in Cuyahoga County at no cost.
- The \$2 million in additional funding will be used to restore a \$1 million cut made by a previous administration in 2018 and support and increase the workforce at Frontline to ensure adequate staffing levels and competitive salaries to retain crisis workers.
- Because of inadequate funding FrontLine has been unable to attract and retain crisis staff needed to meet the rising needs of the community.
- This increased funding and staffing allows nearly 1,000 more individuals to receive crisis services and assessments in-person, via the phone or chat.
- With just 20 crisis workers, Frontline answered over 16,000 hotline calls and provided over 2,300 in-person assessments.
- At this time, many individuals may wait up to 24-hours for an assessment – which is too long in the midst of a crisis.
- It's a demanding job. Workers are out in the community - often in someone's home –at all hours of the day and night.
- The \$27,000 - \$35,000 annual salary of crisis workers is well below what it should be, considering the stress that comes with making life-saving assessments and decisions.

RAP

- I also ask Council to consider providing additional funding to the ADAMHS Board in the amount of \$3.1 million for our Residential Assistance Program - known as RAP.
- RAP provides \$1,100 per month per client for room and board at Adult Care Facilities or Group Homes, and \$200 in spending money for clients while they wait for other federal and state benefits.

- Housing is a basic need and without a place to call home, clients are living on the streets, in shelters and are moving in and out of the homes of friends and family.
- No new clients living with mental illness were able to utilize this program to obtain housing through the Board's program because of cuts made by the previous administration in 2018.
- To ensure that ADAMHS Board dollars are spent responsibly and that clients reside in facilities with a high level of care and comfort, we developed the Peer Seal of Quality program.
- This program uses peers to do a review of the homes to look at upkeep, cleanliness, and amenities in the home. They also look to see that medications and food are stored safely and that there is enough food and supplies for the residents that live there.
- Additional funding for this program would be used to restore cuts and reopen the RAP program to serve approximately 200 new clients living with mental illness.

Closing

- In closing, thank you for your consideration of this request, your commitment to behavioral health and your confidence in the ADAMHS Board of Cuyahoga County.