



STATEHOUSE REPORT

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CCAO crafting legislative agenda for '15 & '16

CCAO members will be convening via the Association's standing committees during September and October to develop recommendations for the 2015-2016 legislative platform. This is the second step in the Association's comprehensive efforts to develop its wide ranging policy priorities and positions for the

During August county commissioners, county executives, and county council members along with the Association's affiliate members were surveyed for platform ideas as well as innovative ways the Association could further assist members in our lobbying efforts.

Now in September and October, the Association's standing committees largely will consider the survey results and review provisions that have been in the platform. (The CCAO Metropolitan and Urban Affairs Committee got a jump on its work in August and will continue their efforts into this fall.)

Each standing committee will make its recommendations by the end of October, which will be forwarded to the CCAO Board of Directors for consideration. Final action will be taken at the CCAO/CEAO winter conference in December when the entire membership is invited to comment and vote on the platform.

CCAO members strongly are encouraged to continue their involvement in this engaging process and to attend standing committee meetings this month and next when possible. Your participation will help assure that the Association's priorities and strategies are reflective of the challenges and strengths of Ohio's counties and its officials.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact a member of the CCAO Policy Staff, who look forward to seeing you in the coming weeks!

CCAO offers testimony to House Study Committee on the drug epidemic's impact on law enforcement

The House of Representatives Study Committee on Law Enforcement Perspectives on the Drug Epidemic & Its Impact on Families heard testimony from CCAO regarding the work of our ad hoc committee to study the county response to mental health and addiction this week. The study committee met in Canton for its third in a series of four regional meetings across the state to gain insight into the challenges that the drug epidemic has presented to law enforcement and the activities and best practices local law enforcement agencies are engaging to

respond to the drug addiction issues.

Tuscarawas County Commissioner and ad hoc committee chair Kerry Metzger had prepared testimony but was ill and unable to be present so CCAO staff member John Leutz acted in the commissioner's stead.

CCAO's [testimony](#) focused on the drug epidemic's impact on our county jails and highlighted three major issues the ad hoc committee has identified: the jail "hot spot" population, our jails serving as de facto treatment facilities and the high mortality rates that are accruing for individuals after leaving our jails.



Rep. Dorothy Pelanda

- Jail "Hot Spot" Population – Data indicates that a small percentage of the county jail population that are experiencing behavioral health, and in particular addiction, are responsible for a large percentage of the jail operation costs.
- Jails as De Facto Treatment Facilities – Communities are having difficulty in meeting the demand for addiction treatment services and, as a consequence, individuals who really need to be receiving medical care are instead incarcerated in our jails simply due to a lack of more appropriate options. CCAO has indicated for years that our jails have neither the resources nor the expertise to be treatment centers.
- High Mortality Post Release – Those incarcerated in our jails who have an opiate addiction have a very high mortality rate post release because they have gone through detox while in jails and upon release resume using drugs at the levels they did prior to incarceration and overdose deaths result.

We informed the study committee that our ad hoc committee was currently identifying strategies and best practices, including early identification of addiction treatment needs at intake, how to provide detox and treatment in a jail setting, better jail diversion strategies, and improved discharge planning and will share our final report with the study committee. But most importantly we noted that it is readily apparent from the county commissioner perspective, even prior to our final committee report, that it will take a strong state and local partnership if we are to make the changes necessary to impact the drug epidemic.

The committee Chair, Representative Dorothy Pelanda, and other members of the committee also heard testimony from the State Medical Board regarding their proactive efforts to reduce prescription drug abuse, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources discussing illegal drug activity occurring at the state park and wildlife areas, and the Ohio State Highway Patrol outlining the Ohio Shield Detail program that is designed to combine the manpower, resources and intelligence efforts of federal, state and local enforcement agencies.

Sewer connection rule update

In past issues of the Statehouse Report we have discussed the Ohio Department of Health's [\(ODH\) proposed administrative rules](#) to regulate Household Sewer Treatment Systems (septic systems). The department has worked with various stakeholder groups, including CCAO, to develop its new rule package to replace the current administrative rules that have been in place since the 1970s.

ODH had considered a rule that would have allowed a home owner to "opt-out" from

connecting to a newly run public sewer line. This proposal was removed and was not part of the proposed rules sent to the Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review (JCARR).

As part of the JCARR process, ODH had to offer a public hearing on its rule package. This hearing was held Wednesday afternoon at the department. JCARR will have its formal public hearing for the proposed rules on September 22. JCARR meets at the Ohio Statehouse in the Senate Finance Hearing Room at 1:30 P.M.

For more information on JCARR, please visit their [website](#). For additional information on ODH's Sewer Connection Rules, please contact CCAO staffer Brian Mead at bmead@ccao.org or 614-220-7982.

Hearing Schedule

Tuesday, September 9

[House Study Committee on Law Enforcement Perspectives on the Drug Epidemic & Its Impact on Families](#), (Chr. [Pelanda, D.](#), 466-8147), University of Cincinnati, Teacher's College Building (Annie Laws Conference Room), 2610 McMicken Circle, Cincinnati, 1:00 pm

- Sentencing Issues and Alternatives to Incarceration from a Judicial Perspective

[House Study Committee on Unemployment Compensation Debt & Reducing Burdens on Ohio Businesses](#) ([Committee Record](#)), (Chr. [Sears, B.](#), 466-1731), Pentaflex, Inc., 4981 Gateway Blvd., Springfield, 1:00 pm

- Public testimony on unemployment compensation debt impacts