**Title: Ohio Counties Pass Levy That Protects Children Against Lifetime Risk of Mental Illnesses**

Ohio citizens just did something no other place in America has done. They voted for a levy to fund and implement a named evidence-based practice in their counties’ elementary schools—scientifically proven to protect children from lifetime mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders, and to increase high-school graduation and university entry. The practice is called, the PAX Good Behavior Game, which is one of the few evidence-based practices with 20-years of highly quality scientific and medical proof of protecting children through adulthood from multiple mental illnesses [1-3].

The citizens of Allen, Auglaize and Hardin counties in Ohio passed a levy to support mental health prevention, intervention and treatment. The 1 mill, five-year levy for Mental Health and Recovery Services Board of Allen, Auglaize and Hardin counties, passed 55 percent to 45 percent overall and passed in all three counties. The vote was 13,070 to 10,489, according to unofficial results from county election boards.

In years past, the levy failed. For example, Hardin County, which is rural and not economically developed, the levy lost last year by almost 500 votes, and this year the levy passed by 500 votes—a net gain of 1,000 votes. Mike Schoenhofer, the executive director, of the three-county Mental Health and Recovery Services Board explained why the levy passed: *“We created a dream that we could prevent these problems, and we provided real evidence that the dream was possible. At a press conference, we brought a long a 14-year veteran teacher who said that PAX made this year the best she’d ever had. We showed graphs of changes in behaviors in the classrooms that predict lifetime mental illnesses, which went from 133 “misbehaviors” per 15 minutes to 2 per fifteen minutes. Our data sold our vision, along with the testimony of teachers.”*

The levy passed significantly because of the mobilization of teachers, parents and community members who have witnessed first-hand the benefit of PAX GBG in in the schools. The benefits have been profound enough that teachers and others mobilized to support the levy, since one of the purposes is to expand the benefits of PAX GBG to every school in the three counties over time, <http://limaohio.com/news/news/456305/Mental-health-board-seeking-new-levy>.

You can see the TV add run in the area about PAX Good Behavior Game on YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8fKp731cCZQ&noredirect=1>

This comes on the heels of a recently published scientific study that shows the early-iteration of PAX GBG studied at Johns Hopkins University, is the first universal classroom strategy proven to evoke the Brain-Derived Neurotropic Factor (BDNF) genes in the brain that protect against lifetime mental illnesses [1].

PAX Good Behavior Game® is the most widely used and studied version of the Good Behavior Game in North America, and was developed by PAXIS Institute of Tucson, Arizona. Dr. Dennis Embry, who is the president/senior scientist of PAXIS Institute, as well as a co-investigator with Johns Hopkins University, is the lead author of the evidence-based practice. Ohio leads America in implementing this practice.

Since 2009, after the U.S. Institute of Medicine singled out this protective strategy for preventing mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders, the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Services Administration funded 38 sites across the country to demonstrate the ease and practicality of PAX Good Behavior Game as a population-level strategy to reduce the soaring rate of these problems in the United States. The PAX Good Behavior Game outcomes and science are summarized on the National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP).

The State of Ohio recently won a major grant to expand PAX Good Behavior Game in the state, which has been estimated that the strategy will save the families, schools, local and state governments approximately $1.9 billion when each first grade cohort of approximate 140,000 reach age 21. In June, each county in Ohio will receive the estimate of projected savings in lives and funds at the statewide prevention conference where Dr. Embry is a keynote speaker.

For more PAX Good Behavior Game program information, please visit:

<http://bit.ly/NREPP>

[www.GoodBehaviorGame.org](http://www.GoodBehaviorGame.org)

To see a short documentary about teachers and administrators using PAX GBG, please visit:

[www.promoteprevent.org](http://www.promoteprevent.org)

For info about the levy proposal by the Mental Health & Recovery Board of Allen, Auglaize and Hardin Counties, please contact:

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