



BEECH ACRES PARENTING CENTER'S JIM MASON PRESENTS TO MEMBERS OF CONGRESS ABOUT OPIOID EPIDEMIC

CINCINNATI, Ohio – March 15, 2018 – Beech Acres Parenting Center president and CEO Jim Mason was in Washington, D.C., on Wednesday, March 14, to present to members of Congress and their staffs about the impact the opioid epidemic is having on the children, families, foster parents and organizations who make up the larger child welfare system. He shared specific recommendations to stem the rising tide of children whose futures are at risk due to the largest epidemic of its kind in our nation's history.

"We need an integrated system of child welfare, substance use, mental health, enforcement, and other resources, so the appropriate services are available when needed to help each child and family," Mason said. "It is also vital that we expand and support each community's 'help-force'; those extended family members, foster and adoptive parents, and professionals who dedicate themselves to the well-being of children and families so they can heal from the trauma they experience."

Mason shared a provider's view from Ohio, including the impact of the opioid epidemic specifically on vulnerable children and the child welfare response. He also talked about local, state and federal roles. Rep. Brad R. Wenstrup (Ohio) and his team were highly supportive and instrumental in facilitating the briefings.

Separate Congressional Briefings took place for the House of Representatives and Senate, both titled: "*A System on the Brink of Disaster: How the Opioid Crisis Taxes the Child Welfare System and Its Children.*" Sponsors for the presentations included Rep. Wenstrup, Rep. Lloyd Doggett (Texas), Sen. Shelly Moore Capito (W.Va.), and Sen. Maggie Hassan (N.H.).

Mason represented not only Beech Acres, but also the Children's Home Society of America, a national organization of child welfare agencies serving millions of children and families each year. Beech Acres is CHSA's member agency in Ohio. Joining Mason on the panel were Dr. Nancy K. Young, executive director of Children and Family Futures; and Terry and Jean Childs, who are grandparents and legal guardians.

(Note to editors: Mason's presentation slides, which include facts and figures that give context to the issue, are available upon request.)

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About Beech Acres:

At Beech Acres Parenting Center, we uncover the natural gifts of children by unleashing the power of parents and caregivers. As a contemporary parenting center, BAPC serves over 20,000 people annually through a wide range of services including foster care, adoption, behavioral health support, parent coaching and much more. All of our programs are founded in our Natural Strength Parenting™ framework which enables parents to unlock their own potential by building on their unique strengths. For more information, visit www.beechacres.org.

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