



# OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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John R. Kasich/Governor

Richard Hodges/Director of Health

February 23, 2016

The Honorable Kris Jordan  
Ohio Senate  
1 Capitol Square  
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chairman Jordan and Members of the Sunset Review Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide information on the Council to Advise on the Establishment and Implementation of the Birth Defects Information System.

The Birth Defects Information System is a data surveillance system for children ages 0-5 with birth defects. Birth defects, or congenital anomalies, are one of the leading causes of infant mortality. Data from the system is used to describe the burden of birth defects in Ohio; facilitate referrals to services to improve health outcomes for children with birth defects; and to educate health professionals and the public about birth defects.

The language establishing the council (ORC 3705.34) was repealed in 2004 as the council was no longer needed once the system was implemented. However, there is a reference to the council in ORC 3705.35.

Since 2004, ODH has convened an ad hoc advisory group on birth defects when external subject matter expertise is needed. Members of the ad hoc group include clinicians, parents, researchers, the Department of Developmental Disabilities, the Ohio Hospital Association, and the March of Dimes.

ODH recommends to sunset the council as its original purpose to advise on the creation of the surveillance system has been completed. ODH continues to work with state and external partners regarding strategies to reduce birth defects such as increasing the use of folic acid and newborn screening for Critical Congenital Heart Disease.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Hodges".

Richard Hodges, MPA  
Director of Health