

PORTAGE COUNTY UPDATE

MENTAL HEALTH & RECOVERY BOARD OF PORTAGE COUNTY

The Mental Health & Recovery Board is on the front line of addressing both the underlying issues of addiction as well as assisting in active recovery efforts by collaborating with behavioral health agencies, other county organizations, and concerned residents. The Board plans for our county's continuum of care for both mental health & addiction services, which includes prevention, treatment, recovery supports, and crisis intervention. The Board promotes awareness events to change the perception of addiction and advocates for legislative change and the continuation of Medicaid expansion.

Addiction is a treatable disease, however it is complicated and there is not one simple answer. Programs and services that are currently being developed and implemented include prevention curriculum in the school districts, training for counselors on trauma, recovery coaches, and medication assisted treatment.

CORONER'S OFFICE OF PORTAGE COUNTY

Last year the Portage County Coroner's Office had its largest case load in modern times. We had 146 coroner cases with 46 of those being accidental deaths due to drug toxicity. So far this year, there are 39 assumed accidental drug toxicity cases. The average age of the decedents is 40. Of the 39 toxicity cases, 26 have been confirmed with the following drugs: Fentanyl with analogs (12), Methamphetamines (5), Cocaine (2), Heroin (1), other opioids (3), other toxicity (4).

The projection of accidental drug overdose deaths for 2017 is between 46-50 cases.

DEPARTMENT OF JOB & FAMILY SERVICES

In 2015 JFS had an average of 150 children in custody. The number rose to 163 in 2016. Already this year, by the end of September, JFS had 215 children in custody. Approximately 55% of children were removed from their parents due to substance abuse, mostly heroin and methamphetamines. Reunification is extremely difficult due to relapses in treatment.

There is a limited foster home availability. Currently there are 41 licensed foster homes but the need is greater. The drug crisis is greatly impacting our department financially. The average monthly cost of a foster home for one child is \$852, while facilities that provide specialized services in addition to residential services can average \$7600 per month. In 2016 JFS spent an average of \$3.3 million dollars on placements for children in custody.

JFS has developed several initiatives to react to the crisis including trauma based interventions for youth such as immersion therapy or diversion therapy, increased independent living programs for teenagers in care due to dismal reunification realities, increased foster parent recruitment efforts, and recovery coach services for families.

UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS PORTAGE MEDICAL CENTER

Addiction Services of UH Portage Medical Center opened in November of 2016 and UH Geauga Medical Centered opened in March of 2017. Addiction Services has treated over 160 patients with a greater than 50 percent sustained sobriety since its opening. The Center has a 90%-100% patient engagement in treatment post discharge. UH now has a mechanism for treating those who have the chronic disease of addiction utilizing Addiction Services' continuum of care chronic disease model.

SHERIFF'S OFFICE OF PORTAGE COUNTY

In 2016 the Portage County Drug Task force removed \$3.9 million of narcotics from the streets of Portage County. Along with opioids, our officers are finding an increase of crystal methamphetamine and cocaine. Various drugs are also being laced with fentanyl.

RECOVERY IN PORTAGE COUNTY

Portage resident Kelly Hart has been in recovery since April 25, 2015. He experimented with alcohol and other drugs as a youth which lead to problems with alcohol as a young adult. Later, he sustained an injury at work and was prescribed opiate pain medications. As his opiate addiction grew, he was introduced to heroin. Kelly went through substance abuse treatment programs in Portage County. He overdosed three times and was revived by naloxone. He is now in recovery and active with Alcoholics Anonymous and shares his recovery story at community awareness events. Kelly is married and has four children.