

## Substance abuse coalition expanding efforts

Drug overdoses and opioid misuse are a community health crisis nationwide. Addiction is a chronic disease that often goes untreated due to lack of resources and stigma. There are many causes of this epidemic that include overprescribing of opiates for pain and pharmaceutical companies minimizing the addictiveness of opiates. Families who have a history of drug and/or alcohol addiction are at a higher risk of becoming addicted.

Here locally, the Portage County Substance Abuse Community Coalition (Coalition) is unifying stakeholders to coordinate strategies that will lead to meaningful outcomes; especially fewer deaths, decrease in people becoming addicted, fewer children being removed from their homes, and decrease in crime and incarceration. The Coalition started as a committee of the Mental Health and Recovery Board of Portage County in 2012 to oversee the development of a men's residential facility. In the fall 2016, the Coalition adopted its current name and opened itself to any individual, family member, organization, and agency that is dedicated to preventing and treating substance use disorders as well as advocating for funds and policies.

This past year, the Coalition has been working to do the following:

- Worked collaboratively to apply for grant opportunities to secure funds to increase the availability of medication assisted treatment (e.g., Suboxone, Vivitrol), recovery housing, local medical withdrawal management services, and peer supporter specialists. Lack of funding is a continuous obstacle that we have faced locally.
- Developed an addiction resource guide for Portage County residents, available online.
- Distributed disposal pouches and dispersed information on our local drug disposal boxes to all the local pharmacies.
- Held many community drug awareness events around the county.
- Advocated about national, state and local issues that affect health care, including regular contacts with elected officials about the need to continue Medicaid expansion.
- Distributed naloxone to the community through the Project DAWN program. Ensured that all police officers in the county are trained in Project DAWN and are carrying naloxone and that dispatchers have been trained.
- Supported our local Ohio Supreme Court Certified drug & mental health courts.
- Increased the drug prevention efforts with education in the schools, marketing campaigns, and awareness events. Education includes addressing stigma and viewing addiction as a medical rather than a legal or moral issue.
- Worked with our Portage Health District and the Community Health Improvement Plan to partner with primary care providers to screen for drug, alcohol and mental health problems to provide integrated health care.
- Focused on trauma-informed care as many individuals that develop addictions have unresolved trauma histories that include physical and sexual abuse.

The solutions to this opioid crisis require a comprehensive and multifaceted approach that must include prevention/education, treatment, recovery supports, and crisis interventions. We know that people need to be able to access a range of different treatment options to fit what works for them. Due to limited funds and scarce resources, communities must band together to enhance and increase their treatment options and availability.

For more about the Coalition, contact the Mental Health & Recovery Board office at 330.673.1756.

## Conversation on Opiates with State Officials

The Board hosted a Conversation between officials from Governor Kasich's office and Portage County leaders.

Guests from Columbus who participated in the panel were Tracy Plouck, Director of Ohio's Mental Health & Addiction Services; Lance Himes, Director of the Ohio Department of Health; Steve Schierholt, Executive Director of Board of Pharmacy; Cindy Mausser of the Department of Rehabilitation & Corrections; and Staff Lt Michael Kemmer of the Department of Public Safety.

Lunch for the event was provided by Bean & the Baker, a Social Enterprise of Coleman Professional Services.



# Portage Opiate Conference

## Responding to the epidemic as a community



Tuesday  
October 31, 2017  
1:00-5:00pm

NEW Center Ballroom, NEOMED  
4209 OH-44, Rootstown

Register at [www.mental-health-recovery.org](http://www.mental-health-recovery.org) or call 330.673.1756 x201

## Featured Speakers

Dr. Christina Delos Reyes  
**MEDICATION ASSISTED  
TREATMENT**

Understand the biological impact of opiates in the brain and learn about medication assisted treatment for opiate addictions

Dr. Jamie Marich  
**TRAUMA AND ADDICTION**

Learn about the relationship between trauma and addiction and trauma treatments including sensory-based and expressive arts

Karen Vadino  
**STRESS & SELFCARE**

Increase awareness of our own stress level and prepare a plan for personal stress management

*Plus: Updates from Community Leaders on our Local Efforts*

## FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Registration required

Sponsored by:



Job & Family Services



3.75 CEUs available for social workers, counselors, psychologists, nurses  
OCDP Board hours available:  
3.75 for treatment professionals; 1.75 for prevention professionals  
Coleman Professional Services, UH Portage Medical Center, and  
Townhall II providing continuing education units.

## NAMI Walk for Recovery & Family to Family Class in September

The Portage County Chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) will hold their annual "Walk for Recovery" on Saturday, Sept 23 at the United Church of Christ in Kent, located at 1400 E Main Street. Doors open at 9am and the walk will begin at 10:45am.

Before the walk steps off participants and community members are welcome to attend an awareness presentation on the drug epidemic in Portage County at 9:30am. The Portage Health District will train attendees on the signs of an overdose and distribute naloxone kits to county residents. Local musician David Stump will perform his new song regarding addiction before the walk.

Donations will be used to support Portage County mental illness family support groups and classes as well as efforts to fight the stigma of mental illness.



Family to Family Class - a 12-week education program for family members who have a loved one with a mental illness. The class is taught by trained local people who have a loved one with a mental illness. The class is being held on Tuesday evenings, starting Sept 19, 6:30-9:00pm at the Church in Aurora located at 146 Chillicothe Rd, Aurora.

To register for the NAMI Walk or the Family to Family class, call 330.673.1756 ext 201.

## NETWORK OF CARE FOR ALL GENERATIONS



Mental Health & Recovery Board  
of Portage County  
155 E. Main Street, Kent, OH 44240



[www.mental-health-recovery.org](http://www.mental-health-recovery.org) • 330.673.1756