

Congressman Tim Ryan's Roundtable on the Opioid Epidemic

Ohio Congressman Tim Ryan (OH-13) held a round table discussion with community leaders from Portage, Summit, and Stark counties to discuss the growing heroin and prescription drug epidemic.

Congressman Ryan listened to the concerns and issues the stakeholders are facing. He also discussed the Breaking Addiction Act of 2015 legislation he introduced with Marcia L. Fudge (OH-11) and Marcy Kaptur (OH-9) which looks to increase the number of addiction treatment beds.

"I hope that this meeting is the beginning of an ongoing dialogue with local professionals who encounter this issue every day," said Congressman Ryan. "We need a comprehensive solution that will increase and expand access to treatment for those who are suffering and help prevent future overdoses and fatalities. I will continue my work in Congress to support legislation that will make this possible."

Portage County Health Commissioner Joseph Diorio and Mental Health & Recovery Board Director of Community Relations Karyn Hall spoke about the addiction treatment services available in Portage.

"In Portage County we've seen the drug deaths due to accidental overdose climb – from 5 people in 2011 to 30 people who died in 2015," said Hall. "We talk to family members every day whose lives have been destroyed by this public health epidemic."

The Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County has established an oversight committee that includes Board and staff members as well as community organizations and family members. The committee is examining all kinds of drug and alcohol addictions across Portage County, particularly focusing on the prevention, treatment, and recovery services that are needed to address this public health problem.

The Portage County Health Department has recently expanded the Project DAWN program to include law enforcement and first responders. Police officers are often the first to a scene due to an emergency call or as a



Discussing the needs of Portage County residents at the Heroin & Prescription Drug Epidemic Roundtable were Portage County Health Commissioner Joseph Diorio, Mental Health & Recovery Board Director of Community Relations Karyn Hall, Congressman Tim Ryan, and Kent Mayor Jerry T. Fiala.

result of patrol. "Two lives were saved by police officers within the first week of providing training and Project DAWN kits," states Joseph Diorio. "This is a true testament to the importance of this program."

Project Dawn is a community-based drug overdose prevention and education program. It provides Narcan (naloxone) kits to friends, family, and community members who are in a position to help someone nearing an overdose and preventing a death. It is available through the Portage County Health Department with funding from the Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County.



Board Associate Director Retires

A retirement reception was held for Associate Director Mary Grant last week. Colleagues and friends stopped by to wish her well including all the Mental Health & Recovery Board past directors.

Pictured are past directors (left) Roberta O'Keefe and Hal Farrier and Dr. Sue Hetrick (on right) with Mary Grant (center) and current executive director Dr. Joel Mowrey.

School Counselors Receive Red Flags Training

With one in five children experiencing a diagnosable emotional or behavioral problem before they become adults, mental health is a critical factor in children's development and their ability to learn.

Counselors from every Portage County school district attended a "Red Flags for Mental Health Education" training and will incorporate the school-based mental health education into their districts.

The course was taught by Penny Frese, PhD, founder and executive director of Red Flags National, a non-profit based in Hudson, Ohio. Frese emphasized that mental health is fundamental to overall health and that early intervention is essential to children's health and development.

Mental health problems are a result of a combination of biological, psychological, and social factors. Like physical disorders, they are most successfully treated at the onset. "It's important to note that Red Flags is not a crisis program," explained Frese. "The goal of Red Flags is to encourage the development of sound mental health habits and enable quick intervention at the first warning signs of difficulty, just as we do for other illnesses."

Red Flags offers a framework for comprehensive mental health education that includes an understanding of good emotional and behavior health, a recognition that mental health problems occur on a continuum, an ability to recognize early warning symptoms, and knowing when and where to ask for help.

The Red Flag framework consists of a curriculum for students, typically taught in the middle school, information given to parents and staff every year, and adoption of a protocol for referring and accommodation of children in need for the school district.

The counselors who attended were enthusiastic that building a culture of mental health in their schools can be inexpensive, sustainable, easily achievable, and beneficial to students and staff alike.

"We are pleased that the school districts will adopt the framework into their schools," said Joel Mowrey, PhD, executive director of the Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County. "Much of the stigma around mental health is due to a lack of understanding that physical and emotional/mental problems are both health problems. It is important to raise awareness and decrease stigma, so people seek help."

The day-long training was organized by the Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County. Each school district was provided a tool-kit for the staff to use to implement Red Flags with funding from the Coleman Foundation's Suicide Prevention Endowment. For more information about Red Flags, contact the Mental Health & Recovery Board at 330-673-1756.



Townhall II hosted April's Mental Health & Recovery Board meeting at Horizon House - the residential treatment center for women in Portage County. Townhall II Executive Director Sue Whitehurst shared the expansion plans for the facility and updated the Board on their other treatment & prevention services. For more information on Townhall II services, call 330.678.3006



A resident of Root House, Family & Community Service's 90-day addiction treatment facility for men, created artwork as gifts for Root House and the Mental Health & Recovery Board.

Pictured from left: Jamie Sitko, Chrissy Walter, Valerie Root, Gene Mills, Alberta Caetta, and Dr. Joel Mowrey

CITEC Registration

The Crisis Intervention Team Education Collaboration is a proactive, 5 day program for school personnel designed to increase awareness of mental health issues and develop crisis management skills. It will be held July 18-22 from 8am-4pm at Waterloo High School.

Cost \$100, 2 Graduate Credit hours, add \$300. Contact Laura at 330-673-1756 x 201 to register.

Upcoming Events:

Mental Health & Recovery Board Meeting
May 9 • 6:30pm
Children's Advantage, Ravenna

Community Awareness Event on Heroin & Opiate Epidemic
May 14 • 10am
Skeels Community Center, Ravenna

Steps of Change OhioCAN Addiction Awareness Event
May 21 • Noon-4pm, Ravenna Park

NETWORK OF CARE FOR ALL GENERATIONS!

Children's Advantage
Coleman Professional Services
Family & Community Services
Townhall II

Take a free online mental health screening
www.mental-health-recovery.org