



Promoting wellness and recovery

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OhioMHAS Announces \$1.5 M in SFY 2015 Community Innovations Funding

RAVENNA – Utilizing administrative savings achieved from last summer’s consolidation of state-funded agencies for mental health and addiction services under a single umbrella, the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) today announced the second round of funding for its Community Innovations initiative.

The Department outlined plans to invest \$1.5 million in SFY 2015 toward 17 projects, serving 31 counties, which help link non-violent offenders with community-based behavioral healthcare services during today’s kickoff event at Coleman Professional Services in Ravenna. All told, the state has invested \$3 million over the biennium with projects serving 53 of Ohio’s 88 counties.

“County jails are not the proper treatment facilities for individuals who have behavioral health issues,” said OhioMHAS Director Tracy Plouck. “Providing linkages upon release from jail to community-based treatment and improves the likelihood of successful reentry and contributes to the welfare and safety of the communities at large.”

The Community Innovations initiative encourages communities to forge collaborative relationships between the behavioral health and criminal justice systems so that individuals with mental illness and/or alcohol and other drug addiction receive the care they need. This, in turn, helps to reduce recidivism, increase public safety and minimize harm to those who come in contact with law enforcement.

“This grant comes at a critical time for Portage County,” said Joel Mowrey, Ph.D., executive director of the Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County, one of the counties which received funding. “We appreciate that the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services gave us flexibility to address some of the needs we have, particularly an increase in jail overcrowding and an increase in drug overdose deaths. We know that a high percentage of our jail population has experienced serious trauma leading to their addiction or mental illness. With this grant, we are building a team of professionals trained in trauma-informed care principles to support their recovery.”

In Portage County, the grant funds trauma-informed care training, a mental health case manager, and an addiction counselor to help inmates with identified mental illness and addictions make the difficult transition from jail back to the community. The issues facing the community concerning

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addiction are adding pressure in many areas, especially the county jail. Local officials see the grant as another way to reduce overdose deaths; the 24 deaths reported so far in 2014 have exceeded last year's total of 22.

Trauma-informed care brings an awareness incorporated into the training of mental health and addiction treatment professionals and agency support staff that an individual's past traumatic experiences may have impacted them and resulted in issues of substance abuse and mental illness. The trauma may include physical or sexual abuse; witnessing family violence; homelessness; illness; separation from family; or being involved in a horrific incident.

The Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County is partnering with the Portage County Sheriff's Office, Coleman Professional Services, Townhall II and Summa's Center for Traumatic Stress for the local grant.

By diverting appropriate individuals from county jails and prisons to treatment and preventing recidivism, communities could see a significant reduction in spending, Plouck said. In Ohio, the average cost of addiction treatment in the community is \$1,600 (without medication-assisted treatment), and the average cost of mental health treatment including two medications is \$7,500 per year; whereas, it costs \$25,269 a year to incarcerate an adult in prison. On a daily basis, the cost of incarcerating an offender in prison is \$69.23; a day in jail is about \$75, while the cost of parole for one day is only \$11.54.

According to the National Institute of Corrections, 17 percent of the jail population in the United States has a serious mental illness and 68 percent has a substance use disorder. An estimated 72 percent of the jail population has a co-occurring substance use disorder when serious mental illness is diagnosed.

See the attached documents for a map of all project locations and descriptions.

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