

Lori Criss

Director, Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services

Lori Criss has worked in the behavioral health field since 1992. She started her career with the Ohio Commission on Minority Health, immersed in how Ohio's communities respond to mental health and addiction for people of varying cultural and racial backgrounds. Then she worked for 18 years in community addiction and trauma treatment for homeless women and their children at Amethyst in Columbus, Ohio. Amethyst is nationally recognized as a leader in long-term family-centered treatment integrated with housing in a community of recovery.

During her time with Amethyst, Lori was an integral part of the team connecting women with high quality addiction, trauma, mental health, and primary care services. She helped design and implement services for children 0 to 18 living with their moms in this distinctive recovery community, including the development of a therapeutic summer camp for kids living in families in recovery. Lori's work at Amethyst included collaboration with children's services, courts and law enforcement, schools, homeless services, primary care and hospital systems. She collaborated on the creation of a HIV/AIDS prevention curriculum to support women in practicing healthy sexual choices in the context of addiction and trauma experiences. She helped develop permanent supportive housing for families in recovery which has become a model for other communities in Ohio and around the country. She collaborated to develop integrated addiction and mental health services for homeless, single adults with severe and persistent mental illness. While at Amethyst, Lori helped found the Substance Abuse Mental Health Administration's (SAMHSA) national workgroup on Women, Sober Housing, and Treatment.

In 2012, Lori took her talents to The Ohio Council of Behavioral Health & Family Services Providers, representing non-profit addiction treatment and prevention, mental health, and family services providers. While there, she advocated for policies and resources that promote access to a full continuum of prevention, treatment and recovery services for people with mental illness and substance use disorders; to ensure insurance coverage parity for mental illness and substance use disorders to support the integration of physical and behavioral healthcare; to create housing choice for people with substance use disorders; and to end Ohio's opiate crisis and rising suicide rate. Through her work at the Ohio Council, Lori helped initiate the creation and state funding of a coordinated network of integrated physical and behavioral health care for pregnant women with opioid use disorder (MOMS). She contributed to the drafting of the federal Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act. Lori also continued to advance the importance of housing choice for people with substance use disorders through several national forums addressing policy and resource inequity that create housing barriers for people recovering from addiction.

Lori managed the production of the *Environmental Scan of Recovery Housing in Ohio* - a document of national relevance in advancing policy and practice of recovery housing, and she led efforts to add a definition of recovery housing to Ohio Revised Code and to ensure that recovery housing is a required element of the continuum of care in all behavioral health jurisdictions. Finally, she advanced the practice of recovery housing through the development of a state-wide practice network implementing national quality standards for recovery housing. This network has been highlighted nationally and serves as a model for replication in other states across the country. In 2017, Lori was named Chief Executive Officer of the Ohio Council.

Ms. Criss holds bachelor's and master's degrees in social work from The Ohio State University. She graduated from SAMHSA's 2010-2011 Women's Addiction Services Leadership Institute, a year-long nationally-selective, intensive program designed to build leaders for the nation's behavioral health field. Lori has most recently served on the Advisory Board to Ohio's Criminal Sentencing Commission, the National Council for Behavioral Health's Addiction Policy Committee, and Ohio's Housing and Homeless Collaborative. She is a former board member for the National Alliance for Recovery Residences and served as the Principal Advisor for Ohio Recovery Housing.

A native of Mingo Jct., Ohio, Lori's roots and heart are in Appalachian Ohio. She now lives in Central Ohio with her husband Scott and their daughters.