

(Aug. 30, 2011) September is Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month in Ohio

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Annual Awareness Campaign Encourages Ohioans to Seek Help

(COLUMBUS, OH) – Everyone knows someone struggling with an alcohol or other drug problem. Whether it's alcoholism, prescription painkiller abuse or teen using marijuana, knowing who to talk to and where to turn for help can save a life. That's why the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services (ODADAS) is pleased to join with Gov. John R. Kasich in observing September 2011 as "National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month" in Ohio.

"Substance abuse and addiction exact a huge personal, societal and economic toll on Ohioans," commented ODADAS Director Orman Hall. "Recovery Month reminds us that effective treatment is available and offers hope for a brighter future for those struggling under the weight of this disease."

Now in its 22nd year, Recovery Month is a nationwide celebration sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. In a resolution designating September as Recovery Month in Ohio, Governor Kasich urged all Ohioans to rally around this year's theme: *Join the Voices of Recovery: Recovery Benefits Everyone*. In response, communities across the state are hosting local awareness events designed to eliminate stigma and other barriers to treatment, culminating with a statewide Rally for Recovery on Sept. 25 in Columbus.

"Addiction can destroy families and negatively impact everything from business to Ohio's criminal justice, health care, child welfare and education systems," Director Hall noted. "The good news is everyone benefits when we do something about it. At ODADAS, we are committed to healing individuals, reuniting families, empowering communities and building a strong, healthy Ohio."

Last year, more than 100,000 men, women and children benefitted from publicly-funded alcohol and other drug addiction treatment and recovery support services in Ohio. Alcohol, marijuana, prescription painkillers and other opiates were the most commonly abused substances. While alcohol and marijuana rates have held relatively steady over the past decade, the number of Ohioans seeking help for an opiate-related problem continued to rise. In fact, treatment admissions for heroin and other opiates – including prescription painkillers – have steadily increased from a low of 3.7 percent of all clients in treatment in 1997 to 17.3 percent last year. In Scioto County, opiate addiction accounts for nearly 85 percent of clients seeking treatment.

"Resolving Ohio's opiate epidemic is priority number one," Director Hall said. "Under Governor Kasich's leadership, we have been making significant progress this year in terms of public awareness, prevention education, treatment and enforcement," he said, adding that the increases in the number of individuals presenting for treatment for heroin and other opiates corresponds with a 900 percent increase in the number of prescription painkiller doses prescribed over the last decade.

Passage of legislation that shuts down the illegal pill mills fueling Ohio's opiate crisis and tightens prescriber regulations, the establishment of an Interstate Opiate Task Force and Cabinet-level Opiate Action Team along with an executive order authorizing the expansion of medication assisted treatment therapies available to Ohio treatment providers, are among the many accomplishments achieved since January.

"Alcohol and other drug addiction remains one of the most significant public health threats in Ohio," Director Hall said. "We must continue to raise awareness around the importance of Recovery Month and drive home the message that we can and do make a difference in the lives of those who need treatment, individuals in recovery and those affected by substance abuse and addiction."

For more information about **Recovery Month**, visit: www.recoverymonth.gov. If you, or someone you know, need help, contact Ohio's toll-free HELPLINE at 1-800-788-7254 or visit www.odadas.ohio.gov to

learn about local treatment options. Visit the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services on Facebook -- <http://on.fb.me/qdBI3n>

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