



## **State Mental Health, Addiction Agency Targets \$3 Million to Help At-Risk Youth**

(COLUMBUS – Feb. 7, 2019) The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) announced today that it will provide a one-time, \$3 million funding boost to help counties address the unmet and uninsured needs of multi-system youth who are on the cusp of removal from their homes or at risk of entering the justice or foster care systems. These flexible funds will help meet the unique needs of families and promote a safe home environment. Funds will be made available through Ohio’s FFY 2019 federal Mental Health Block Grant.

Multi-System Youth (MSY) refers to children with significant mental health, addiction and/or developmental delays who are involved, or at risk of being involved, with child protection and/or juvenile justice. Often these children are unable to able to access the right services or supports to remain stable and in their own home. They may have complex needs that cannot be met by a single system. When children have intensive needs that exhaust the resources of both the family and community, parents sometimes face a decision to relinquish custody to a child protection agency to access necessary services.

“While local support and collaboration have been successful in helping many children and their families, some youth served by multiple systems have needs so extreme that they cannot be supported through these resources,” said OhioMHAS Director Lori Criss. “Our goal with these funds is to meet the needs of children with intense behavioral health needs and keep families together.”

The funds will be channeled to Ohio’s 50 county Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services boards following a two-tiered formula. Each board will receive \$15,000 as a base amount. The remaining \$2.5 million will be distributed to boards based on the number of children with intellectual disabilities and mental health diagnoses and/or involvement in multiple public systems, such as child protective service. Boards will have until the end of the state fiscal year (June 30) to expend the funds.

# # #

**Contact:** Eric Wandersleben, OhioMHAS, Director of Media Relations, 614.728.5090