

**For Immediate Release**

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**Federal COVID Relief Funds to Boost Ohio's Efforts to Support Comprehensive Prevention, Treatment and Recovery Support Services Amid Pandemic**

*SAMHSA Commits More Than \$86M in One-Time Funding To Supplement Ohio's Community Mental Health, Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant Initiatives*

(COLUMBUS, OH) – Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) Director Lori Criss today announced that Ohio is receiving a significant funding boost from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to help address the state's mental illness and substance use disorder crisis. As part of a national \$2.5 billion COVID-19 relief funding strategy, SAMHSA pledged more than \$86 million in one-time funding to supplement Ohio's Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant subsidies.

"We know multiple stressors during the pandemic – isolation, sickness, grief, job loss, food instability and loss of routines – have affected many Ohioans and contributed to unprecedented challenges for behavioral health providers in our state," said Director Criss. "We are grateful for this additional support from our federal partners and look forward to deploying these resources statewide to help strengthen pathways to prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery services, especially for underserved groups."

The *Community Mental Health Services Block Grant* program allows states and territories to provide comprehensive community mental health services and address needs and gaps in existing treatment services for those with severe mental health conditions. Through this initiative, Ohio will receive just under \$25.8 million in additional block grant funds.

The *Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant* program allows states and territories to plan, implement, and evaluate activities to prevent and treat substance use disorders. This funding will allow recipients to maximize efficiency in existing treatment and recovery infrastructure, promote support for providers and address unique local needs to deliver substance use disorder prevention. Ohio is slated to receive just under \$60.5 million.

The supplemental funding will be channeled to local communities via a mix of direct-funded initiatives and competitively bid projects focused on innovation, quality services through the lifespan, crisis, equity, outreach and behavioral health integration. Specific examples, include, but are not limited to:

- Suicide prevention awareness and training
- Crisis Intervention services
- Peer support services and peer navigators
- Faith-based and community engagement initiatives
- Prevention for children and families

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- Cultural and linguistically competent services enhancements
- Forensic monitoring and evaluation
- Mental health courts
- Recovery supports (including housing and supported employment)

Recently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released data confirming a rise in fatal overdoses during the pandemic, and the past year's increases in calls to helplines across the country are indicative of growing anxiety, depression, and trauma in Americans. The COVID-19 pandemic and the corresponding economic crisis have been especially devastating for Black and Latino communities, who are experiencing a disproportionate number of COVID-19 infections and deaths as well as higher-than-average unemployment rates.

"The demand for early intervention, prevention, treatment and recovery support services has never been greater," said Criss. "Our new normal is what we do next. By addressing mental illness and addiction, this funding will be a crucial part of helping Ohio move forward."

For those struggling with mental illness or a substance use disorder, contact the Ohio CareLine at 1-800-720-9616 for free, confidential support. Ohio also maintains a free, confidential Crisis Text Line. Text the keyword 4HOPE to 741 741 to connect with a counselor.

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