

Recovery is possible.

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RecoveryOhio

Community

ACTION GUIDE



MIKE DEWINE
GOVERNOR OF OHIO



JON HUSTED
LT. GOVERNOR OF OHIO

www.RecoveryOhio.gov



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INTRODUCTION

Ohio has put into action one of the most comprehensive and aggressive strategies in the country for fighting addiction.

Ohio remains focused on reducing the illicit drug supply through interdiction efforts, expanding the use of life-saving overdose reversal medications, and driving access to treatment and recovery supports. Yet, as the addiction crisis has evolved, so must our efforts to combat it. Communities throughout Ohio have been impacted by this issue and experienced the personal and professional burden of this crisis. Previous renditions of this community action guide have served as a road map for local communities battling the addiction crisis and created a framework to address the issue.

The need for a new edition of this action guide was identified as a key priority of the RecoveryOhio Overdose Strike Team. The Overdose Strike Team was established to amplify our focus on the rising rate of overdoses and overdose death in the state. This group, comprised of members of Governor Mike DeWine's RecoveryOhio initiative, the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, the Ohio Department of Health, the Ohio Department of Public Safety, the Ohio Bureau of Worker's Compensation, the Ohio Board of Pharmacy, and the Medical Board of Ohio met to construct a comprehensive strategy to fight addiction and prevent future overdoses.

The Strike Team focused their work on the 23 counties in Ohio that represent approximately 80% of all overdose deaths. Since its inception, the Strike Team has worked to bring together local community leaders to address this issue and share best practices.

Building on existing work underway in communities and the seven goals and action steps outlined in the previous action guide, this version will serve as a product of the Overdose Strike Team to strengthen community partnerships, enhance prevention strategies, and ensure that those needing treatment or additional support are able to find it.



"I am proud of the work that Ohio communities have done to address the behavioral health needs of their residents, but there is more work to be done. Our hope is that the resources highlighted in this guide offer insight on new and emerging practices that can be utilized in local communities."

- Mike DeWine, Governor of Ohio



The previous version of this action guide may be found here:

<https://mha.ohio.gov/static/AboutUs/MediaCenter/PublicationsandFactSheets/Ohio-2018-Action-Guide-to-Address-Opioid-Abuse.pdf>



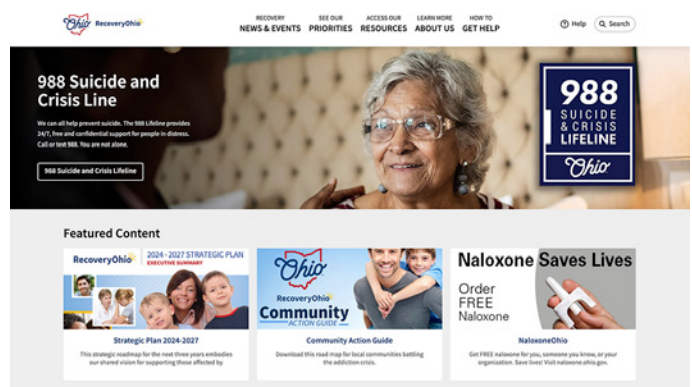
RECOVERYOHIO

Governor Mike DeWine commissioned the RecoveryOhio initiative to coordinate the work of state departments, boards, and commissions by leveraging Ohio's existing resources and seeking new opportunities.

RecoveryOhio's goal is to create a system to help make treatment available to Ohioans in need, provide support services for those in recovery and their families, offer direction for the state's prevention and education efforts, and work with local law enforcement to provide resources to fight illicit drugs at the source.

RecoveryOhio, within the Office of Governor Mike DeWine, is comprised of representatives with diverse backgrounds representing the full spectrum of skills and knowledge needed to direct and manage efforts across Ohio. RecoveryOhio collaborates with an internal state team with representatives from numerous state departments, boards, and commissions. For additional advice and consultation on the best ways to improve our state's response to this crisis, the RecoveryOhio State Team turns to an external group, the RecoveryOhio Advisory Council, who are Governor-appointed experts from both the public and private sectors with experience in the fields of treatment, prevention, recovery support, public health, criminal justice, in addition to those who are family members and individuals with lived experience.

With help from the RecoveryOhio Advisory Council and many great partners throughout the state of Ohio, RecoveryOhio brings these core values to the forefront of everyday work through this updated action guide. To do so, RecoveryOhio has worked with local partners and solicited feedback on best practices and other innovative strategies being implemented across the state.



For more information go to
[RecoveryOhio.gov](https://www.RecoveryOhio.gov)



GOAL 1

Strengthen Partnerships

Partnerships in the community are as important as ever. Forging strong partnerships across local and state levels is necessary for sharing best practices and ensuring that attention to mental health and substance misuse issues are addressed.

Involving a variety of partners in solutions leads to a systems-based approach that connects all community sectors and provides support for all members of the community. By working together, we can support people at all possible intervention points, meeting people where they are, from primary prevention to harm reduction, to treatment and recovery supports.



Organize a broad and inclusive coalition.

This group should be representative of the community, including government leaders, law enforcement, the faith-community, schools, and organizations that are well-positioned to identify and engage specific at-risk groups. The coalition must provide community-wide oversight to establish accountability and ensure the effective use of resources.

- Identify organizations currently working in this space.
- Enlist members willing to lead on behalf of the sector they are representing.
- Establish a clear organizational structure and a plan of succession to cultivate future members.
- Select a leader who communicates effectively, organizes plans into action, and inspires the team.

Community Needs Assessment

It is important to assess your current situation before forging new partnerships. Who are your current partners and what roles do they fill? Understand what your population needs and conduct a review of the resources that are available. Identify the readiness of the community to address those needs.

- Identify needs and service gaps and develop plans to address them.
- Deliver accurate information regarding prevention, treatment, and recovery supports that are available.
- Construct a plan of action for significant overdose trends or incidents.
- Develop initiatives that can be sustained through grassroots funding and organization.

Recruitment of Community Partners

When seeking community partners, think broadly. Consider recruiting businesses, faith leaders, and local charitable organizations. Take advantage of existing opportunities where people gather to share resources such as county fairs, libraries, or local high school sporting events to recruit new partners. Look for groups that offer a diversity of cultural experiences and backgrounds. These options may include volunteer groups, neighborhood coalitions, or faith-based entities. Also, be sure to include people and families with lived experience in substance use or mental health conditions. Effective solutions consider the perspectives and experiences of those impacted.

View page 4 of the previous action guide for suggestions on who to include when developing your coalition.

Gathering Data

In addition to the cross-sector collaborations that are needed to develop and sustain your coalition, it is also critical to analyze a range of data that can guide and focus community efforts. A strong data set can help determine the needs of the community, including enhancing surveillance of trends and pinpointing where efforts should be concentrated. Data also provides insight on those populations that are in the greatest need of support.

Gathering data in your community helps to identify local needs and inform next steps. There are a variety of ways to begin collecting and utilizing local data. Several school-based options exist such as the Youth Risk Behavior Study (YRBS) and the Ohio Healthy Youth Environments Survey (OHYES!), which can be administered in school buildings and help inform prevention practices in your community. In addition, your community may consider creating an Overdose Fatality Review Committee. This committee would use mapped overdose data for a unified community response. Use this data to drive strategies and continuously assess need and impact.

Ross County HOPE Partnership

The Hope Partnership (HPP) is a local Ross County Collaboration dedicated to the hope of a community free of substance use disorder.



THE HOPE PARTNERSHIP
PROJECT COLLABORATIVE



THE HOPE PARTNERSHIP
PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE



THE HOPE PARTNERSHIP
PROJECT FOCUS GROUPS

Visit their website at Hopepartnershipproject.com for more information on the diverse team of individuals who make up this organization.



Behavioral Health Dashboards

For the first time, the State of Ohio is making behavioral health data from multiple agencies accessible in a single location. This dashboard provides a county and state level picture of long-term trends in opioid use disorder, overdoses, and treatment.

Visit the [State of Ohio Integrated Behavioral Health Dashboard](#) to learn more.



CheckList:

- ☐ Build a broad-based, diverse community coalition to take action (Suggest using the "Composing Your Community Team" list from the first Opiate Action Guide).
- ☐ Assess what data currently exists in your community, and what else is needed.
- ☐ Engage priority populations; involve them in planning the messaging and distributing the message.
- ☐ Develop mechanisms for information-sharing across systems if they do not exist already.
- ☐ Inventory local treatment and recovery options.

GOAL 2



End Stigma

Stigma refers to negative feelings, misinformation or prejudice toward people affected by substance use disorder and mental illness.

Stigma can include stereotyping and even fearing a person living with these conditions. Stigma is dangerous because it can lead to embarrassment and shame for the person affected, and it directly causes people to delay or avoid treatment when they need it.

Focusing on change – change in attitude, language, and understanding – is needed to break down stigma.

Assess Attitudes and Language

Changing attitudes toward substance use disorders and mental illness will improve the health and well-being of your community. Ensuring that individuals can receive treatment for a mental health condition just as they would for a physical ailment, will help our fellow Ohioans receive the treatment they need as they begin their recovery journey. A statewide campaign, Beat the Stigma, is a free multi-media resource that can be shared in your community to help change attitudes and unintentional stigma toward our peers.

The words you use when talking about substance use disorder, addiction, and mental illness matter. Be sure to use person-first language because a person is not defined by their illness. Avoid words like “addict, junkie, or user” when referring to a person with a substance use disorder and words like “crazy, schizo, or nuts” when talking about a person with a mental illness.



Beat the Stigma

Consider sharing the **Beat the Stigma** campaign with civic groups, faith-based entities, media, and schools. Provide a safe space to talk about mental illness and substance use disorder and encourage community members to support people in treatment and recovery.

Stigma and word choice matter in all aspects of the community. A new resource guide was developed to support media professionals in conducting responsible reporting on mental health and substance use stories.



Check List:

- ☐ Continue conversations through community town halls or listening sessions and include people with lived experiences in the planning.
- ☐ Share the Beat the Stigma public education campaign.
- ☐ Have marketing experts and media representatives as members of your coalition or agency board and use the experts' knowledge and connections.
- ☐ Review current marketing materials and websites owned by your community organization for the appropriate use of person-first language.



GOAL 3

Sustain and Enhance Prevention Practices

Prevention efforts implemented across the lifespan can impact individuals, families, and communities.

Focusing prevention efforts on children and their parents or other caregivers increases the likelihood that mental health issues in children will be addressed early, before they can evolve into full-blown behavioral health conditions, including substance use disorders.

Research and practice have identified risk and protective factors that affect the vulnerability of children to mental, emotional, and behavioral (MEB) health problems. They include the broad society, the community to which a person belongs, their relationships, and individual characteristics. Protective factors that buffer young people from exposure to risks begin with bonding or attachment and commitment to families, schools, communities, and peers.



In an effort to promote mental health and prevent tobacco, alcohol, and other drug use among Ohio's youth, there is a simple tool that can help: conversation. For example, when parents talk with their teens about drugs, these youth are up to 50% less likely to use drugs. Tap into multiple free resources for parent conversations with children and youth at **Talk, They Hear You**, **Start Talking!** and **Be Present**. In addition to promoting these conversations among families, the following areas provide additional opportunities to support prevention efforts in the community.

Establish local prevention coalitions and youth-led opportunities

Every community should have an active prevention coalition. A youth peer-to-peer component can show kids that if they choose to be drug-free, they are in the majority. For communities who already have a prevention coalition, consider engaging new members or connecting with one of the statewide organizations below. The Columbus-based Prevention Action Alliance can provide technical assistance to any area of the state wishing to build a community-based prevention network. Contact Prevention Action Alliance at preventionactionalliance.org.

The Statewide Prevention Coalition Association (SPCA) is a network comprised of more than 119 community coalitions dedicated to preventing substance misuse and promoting mental health wellness. SPCA members are often community coalitions, campus/college coalitions, local task forces, family engagement advocacy groups, and certified prevention agencies.

Deploy prevention programming in schools

Many schools are already using evidence-based prevention programs, but more can be done. Ohio legislation has required the board of education of each local school district to select a health curriculum that includes lessons on the dangers of substance use. For communities that have already implemented school-based prevention programming, it is necessary to assess existing programming to ensure that each child in grades K-12 receives prevention programming each year. Beyond K-12 environments, colleges and universities can also promote awareness and educate their students on the topic.



Suicide prevention in the community

Communities have a crucial role in suicide prevention. Forming a broad-based suicide prevention coalition can be an initial step for examining the suicide issue in your community and identifying the strategies that may be most appropriate and effective.

The Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation (OSPF) can support a community in this effort. **The Ohio Suicide Prevention Plan** was developed by Ohio stakeholders representing the many facets of this public health issue. This plan is designed to assist communities with local suicide prevention efforts, as well as provide guidance for policies and best practices at the state level to reduce suicides and suicide attempts.

Develop culturally relevant, age-appropriate communications

Behavioral health disorders do not recognize age, race, gender, or income. Every member of a community has the potential to be impacted, and prevention providers and coalitions should review data that may provide an understanding of the unique needs of their community. Understanding the social determinants of health specific to your local community will assist with tailoring the services and supports most needed locally. According to the Ohio Department of Health's website, social determinants of health are the non-medical factors that influence health outcomes. They are the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life. A new data resource for local communities is the Social Determinants of Health dashboard. This dashboard can be filtered by five domains and more than 100 metrics. **Click here for more information, or to access the Social Determinants of Health Dashboard.**

Counterfeit Pill Educational Resources

RecoveryOhio has partnered with several state agencies to create a new public awareness campaign focused on warning middle school, high school, and college students and their families of the dangers of counterfeit pills. **Counterfeit pills** have become increasingly easier to access online, as well as more difficult to differentiate from real medications prescribed by a doctor. This campaign includes social media videos, infographics, flyers, and fact sheets.



CheckList:

- ☐ Involve members of the population you want to serve in developing strategies and materials.
- ☐ Field test materials for comprehension and cultural acceptance.
- ☐ Translate items into the language(s) of the population(s) served.
- ☐ Deliver the material through multiple venues (e.g., public service announcements and social media content).
- ☐ Support a local drug prevention coalition. Find a coalition near you: <https://preventionactionalliance.org/connect/state-wide-prevention-coalition-association/>
- ☐ Share information on 988 and the Crisis Text Line widely in your community. <https://mha.ohio.gov/Families-Children-and-Adults/Get-Help/Crisis-Text-Line>
- ☐ Sign up for free tips such as *Know!* for parents and *Teachable Moments* for educators.
- ☐ Invite speakers to present at schools or other events in your area.
- ☐ Utilize the free **HOPE Curriculum** to develop students' functional knowledge, attitudes, and necessary skills to prevent drug abuse.



Adopt and Support Harm Reduction Strategies

Prevent Overdose by Promoting Harm Reduction

Overdoses are preventable, and the practice of harm reduction offers evidence-based strategies that reduce the risk of dying from an overdose. A variety of harm reduction strategies exist in local communities across the state.

Community Strategies

Harm reduction efforts may look different based on the needs of each community. Communities should choose evidence-based harm reduction strategies that best serve those in their local community and strengthen their fight against the drug epidemic.



Naloxone (sometimes referred to by the brand name Narcan) is a medication that can reverse an overdose caused by an opioid drug (heroin, fentanyl, or prescription pain medications). When administered during an overdose, naloxone

blocks the effects of opioids on the brain and quickly restores breathing. Naloxone has been used safely by emergency medical professionals for more than 40 years and has only this one critical function: to reverse the effects of opioids to prevent overdose death. Naloxone has no potential for abuse.

If naloxone is given to a person who is not experiencing an opioid overdose, it is harmless. If naloxone is administered to a person who is dependent on opioids, it will produce withdrawal symptoms. Withdrawal, although uncomfortable, is not life-threatening.



Fentanyl test strips give persons using any drug the ability to test for fentanyl products. Fentanyl test strips have been proven to change drug use behavior among some persons using drugs, and they have the potential to minimize the extreme risk associated

with fentanyl use. Fentanyl and fentanyl analogues increasingly have become a part of Ohio's illicit drug market. Not only have these drugs replaced much of the heroin supply, but fentanyl has also been added, disguised to look like or contaminated other illicit and legal drugs such as cocaine, methamphetamine, and Adderall. Oftentimes, this situation has resulted in persons believing that they are buying one drug (e.g., crack cocaine), but they are receiving a combination of drugs that include a fentanyl product.

Harm reduction messaging is an essential part of any campaign to reduce overdose death. The Ohio Department of Health has developed its own harm reduction campaign: the **OH Against OD campaign**. In addition to this campaign, national, state, and local campaigns have been deployed since the onset of the opioid epidemic. Community coalitions can adopt one of these campaigns or generate their own messaging to fit their community's need.



Be Informed about the Good Samaritan Law

Good Samaritan laws exist to protect health care professionals and laypersons from legal liability under certain conditions. Ohio's Good Samaritan laws allow health care professionals to prescribe naloxone to anyone, no matter whether the person actively uses drugs or has never used drugs. Laypersons are also protected under these laws if they administer naloxone during a suspected drug overdose. Even if a person is using drugs with someone who overdoses, the Good Samaritan law provides immunity for minor drug possession as long as they call 911 and follow other guidelines within Ohio Revised Code 2925.11.



Project Dawn

Ohio's network of opioid education and naloxone distribution programs is called



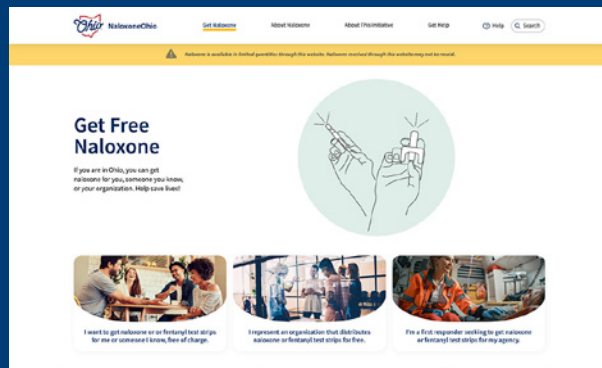
Project DAWN (Deaths Avoided With Naloxone).

Program participants receive a take-home naloxone kit free of charge and training on:

- Recognizing the signs and symptoms of overdose.
- Distinguishing between different types of overdoses.
- Performing rescue breathing.
- Calling emergency medical services.
- Administering intranasal naloxone.



Naloxone.Ohio.Gov



Launched in August 2022, Naloxone.Ohio.Gov is new website that provides Ohioans with a simplified process for accessing naloxone, a lifesaving drug used in the event of an opioid overdose.

Visit Naloxone.Ohio.Gov to obtain a naloxone kit and training on how to use it.



Check List:

- ☐ Promote harm reduction strategies throughout the community.
- ☐ Distribute naloxone kits to key groups including: individuals with medical conditions that put them at risk for an overdose; prison or jail inmates upon release; people completing a treatment program; people discharged from a hospital after an overdose.
- ☐ Encourage individual community members to request and carry naloxone by visiting Naloxone.Ohio.Gov.
- ☐ Develop an Overdose Response Team to supply naloxone to people living in neighborhoods with recent overdoses and link individuals to community resources and treatment.

GOAL 5



Linking People to Treatment

Substance use and mental illness place a heavy personal and economic toll on individuals, families, and communities. Untreated mental health and substance use disorders place a heavy burden on emergency departments and first responders who continue to respond to a rise in opioid overdoses. It also has an impact on communities more broadly.

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), only slightly more than 10 percent of people who need treatment actually connect to care. There are multiple factors as to why people go untreated. Some may be reluctant to seek treatment because they hold certain cultural beliefs about it; others may not have insurance to cover the costs. Some may live in an area where treatment isn't readily available or have a stigma associated with accessing treatment.



Connecting To Treatment

Formally launched in 2022, 988 is the new national suicide prevention hotline. Any person experiencing a suicidal crisis, mental or addiction related distress can now access the easy-to-remember, three-digit number for immediate assistance. Additionally, Ohio launched a statewide CareLine (1-800-720-9616) to provide critical emotional support and linkages to help. The free, confidential CareLine is staffed by trained counselors 24/7, 365 days a year. In addition to providing brief intervention services, CareLine staff also refer calls to community providers for appropriate services. The State of Ohio also maintains a free, confidential Crisis Text Line service. Users simply text the keyword 4HOPE to 741 741 to be connected to a trained counselor. While the service is available to all, data suggests this service is particularly helpful among young Ohioans. In fact, nearly 75% of all text line conversations are initiated by persons between the ages of 13-24.

Payment for Treatment

Regardless of if a person has public or private insurance, there are resources and education available that explain benefit and payment options for each.

Private Insurance:

The Ohio Department of Insurance (ODI) leads a robust effort to provide trainings to local community organizations, county Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Service Boards, and providers about how to access and use mental health and substance use disorder benefits. ODI also provides education on the appeals process, helping Ohioans find a pathway forward when a claim has been denied. ODI has also created a **Mental Health Parity and Substance Use Disorder Toolkit** that includes information to help individuals understand health insurance coverage for these medical conditions. For additional help understanding your mental health and substance use disorder benefits, call the Ohio Department of Insurance at 1-855-438-6442 (1-855-GET-MHIA)

The Ohio Department of Insurance has also recently launched **the Ohio Mental Health Insurance Assistance Office**. This office is the state's official resource to help consumers, mental health advocates, behavioral health providers, employees, first responders and other stakeholders understand and navigate mental health and substance use disorder insurance so Ohioans can get access to the treatment they need.

Public health coverage:

The Ohio Department of Medicaid, meanwhile, provides helpful guidance on Medicaid eligibility and enrollment.

Peer Recovery Support

In many communities, peer recovery support specialists are available to help individuals navigate the system and find appropriate treatment resources and recovery supports such as housing, employment, support groups, and more. In Ohio, peer recovery supporters become certified by taking an in-person training or by having three years of work or volunteer experience as a peer navigator, peer specialist, peer supporter, or peer recovery coach. Click [HERE](#) to view a list of peer run organizations in Ohio.



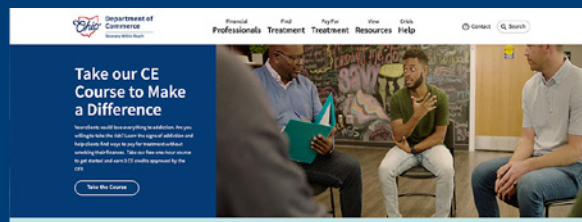
Richland County Behavioral Health Urgent Care

In August 2021, the Richland County Mental Health and Recovery Services Board announced the launch of the **Behavioral Health Urgent Care** location. This pilot project offers the community access to behavioral health services without an appointment, ensuring that individuals and their families have access to care at the time of need, avoiding unnecessary delays.



Ohioans experiencing suicidal crisis, mental health or addiction-related distress are now able to call 988, an easy-to-remember, three-digit number to access free, 24/7, confidential support for themselves or loved ones.

Recovery Within Reach



RecoveryOhio, in partnership with the Ohio Department of Commerce, released **Recovery Within Reach** in 2022. This effort is designed to train Ohio's financial advisors and connect the public with information about the economic impact of opioid addiction on families.



CheckList:

- ☐ Promote 988 widely in your community.
- ☐ Promote the Ohio CareLine: 1-800-720-9616.
- ☐ Promote the Crisis Text Line.
- ☐ Expand use of peer-to-peer supporters.
- ☐ Assist individuals with enrolling into Medicaid.
- ☐ Promote open enrollment for individuals without employer sponsored health insurance.
- ☐ Host a mental health benefits training through the Ohio Department of Insurance.
- ☐ Explore workplace policies for linking employees to treatment.

GOAL 6



Help Sustain Recovery

Recovery from mental illness and substance use disorders is possible. The right set of resources and support in your community can help individuals achieve and maintain their recovery. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the four dimensions of recovery are: health (making informed, healthy choices that support physical and emotional well-being); home (having a stable and safe place to live); purpose (engaging in meaningful daily activities, such as a job or school, volunteering, caring for your family, or being creative); and community (building relationships and social networks that provide support). Ensuring that your community offers recovery services that target each of these categories will promote a well-rounded recovery community for individuals with mental illness and substance use disorders.

When integrated with prevention and treatment services and criminal justice alternatives, robust community-focused recovery support networks improve individual outcomes. Individuals and families impacted by substance use and mental health issues are as diverse as the communities across Ohio. Recovery supports should meet these specific community needs and evolve as necessary.

Determine which recovery services are currently available

The first step is to take an inventory of the full array of mental health and substance use disorder recovery support services available in the area. Recruit new community stakeholders and partners with a goal to include higher education, faith communities, hospitals, the private sector, chambers of commerce, community action organizations, and service organizations (e.g., Rotaries, Eagles) to help with this step.

Consider the existence and expansion of specialty dockets such as family drug courts, veterans courts, and “Stepping Up” courts when completing your inventory of recovery support services. Support for re-entry education with parole/probation officers and judges will also maximize awareness of existing local resources.

Then, identify your community’s actual need for recovery support services to determine current capacity. Is there an abundance of resources in one area and a dire lack in another? Note redundancies and services that go unused. Access the [**Ohio Compassion Map**](#) for additional resources near you.



Prioritize Housing and Job Supports

Individuals beginning their recovery journey need access to a safe place to live and a way to support themselves so they can focus on their treatment and recovery. Ohio has worked to expand housing options for individuals and families and continues to promote local drug-free workplaces. Recovery housing environments that provide peer support and case management to enhance traditional treatment, offer an opportunity of stability for individuals with a mental health or substance use disorder. To search for quality recovery housing near you, visit the [**Ohio Recovery Housing Locator**](#).

Supportive services for basic needs including food, daycare, clothing, and transportation are critical additional resources that will help strengthen an individual’s recovery.

Encourage employers in your community to hire people with this lived experience. To find potential employees, companies can partner with peer-run organizations, which are groups directed by people with lived experience with substance use disorder or mental illness. You can also seek out the guidance of certified peer supporters with lived experience of their own who are trained to coach others through their recovery journeys.

Promote Peer Support Networks

Peer recovery services are community-based services for people with a mental illness or substance use disorder. Peer services are provided by individuals in recovery from mental illness or a substance use disorder who use their personal experience as a tool to assist others. These activities promote recovery, self-determination, self-advocacy, well-being, and independence.



NAMI Ohio Parent Peer Support:

In 2020, NAMI Ohio created and finalized a curriculum for **Parent Peer Support Specialists**. They are now hosting virtual trainings across Ohio for caregivers of children with mental, emotional, or behavioral health needs to become Parent Peer Support Specialists. Parent Peer Support Specialists provide empathetic listening, emotional support, and use their lived experience to help other parents navigate the child-serving systems.

Contact Tameika Wright at NAMI Ohio,
tameika@namiohio.org or 614-224-2700



In late 2022, Muskingum County welcomed a new 34-unit apartment building in downtown Zanesville. The location will serve as housing for people in recovery from a substance use disorder. Providing safe housing for individuals entering their recovery journey is critical and helps to increase their chances of sustaining long-term recovery.



Check List:

- ☐ Determine which recovery services are currently available.
- ☐ Strengthen housing options and job supports.
- ☐ Create more opportunities for family members such as trainings and support groups.
- ☐ Utilize peer support networks.

GOAL 7



Engaging First Responders and the Public Safety Community

Efforts to support the mental and physical health of first responders continue to be important as a rise in drug overdose deaths, particularly related to opioids, has devastated communities and severely strained public safety providers. Further complicating the work of first responders is the unmet demand for mental health services in many communities. In addition to the community demand, national research has highlighted an increase in mental health conditions for first responders. Ohio's first responders are not immune to this trend.



By coordinating law enforcement, the justice system, emergency medical services (EMS), and fire services with mental health and addiction services, communities can enhance the living environment for people with substance use disorder and mental illness. Public safety agencies can make positive change by working with local health care providers and community service agencies to coordinate efforts and focus more heavily on prevention, treatment, and recovery.

Coordinating Efforts

These partnerships take many forms in communities throughout Ohio. One example is Quick Response Teams (QRT), which are made up of first responders, health care providers, and others. QRTs visit individuals who have recently overdosed and offer support and resources. **Grant funding** is available to support QRTs and similar efforts. In addition to the QRTs, **Crisis Intervention Team (CIT)** programs help direct people with mental illness into treatment instead of incarceration by providing officers practical techniques for deescalating crisis. Through a partnership with The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) and Northeast Ohio Medical University (NEOMED), there are a variety of activities and training opportunities related to CIT program development. An additional opportunity for coordination that is available for Ohio communities is the national Stepping Up initiative. **Stepping Up** works to reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in jails. The Stepping Up initiative provides a resource toolkit that helps counties assess their existing efforts and implement a system-level, data-driven plan to reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in local jails.

Connecting to Care

Supporting those who support us in times of great need is critical for the overall strength and well-being of our communities. The mental health of our first responders should be prioritized and appropriate mental health resources should be available to every first responder in Ohio. Building awareness around existing resources and knowing where to turn when help is needed are vital to addressing the needs of Ohio's first responder community.



The situations first responders are generally faced with are inherently difficult and stressful. They are typically the first to arrive on the scene of events involving injuries and loss of life. They often provide emotional as well as physical support to traumatized survivors. These duties often put first responders at risk for secondary or vicarious traumatization. Greater collaboration, education, awareness, and community outreach is needed to ensure that quality mental health resources are available to any first responder who needs them. Ohio has focused tremendous effort on building capacity to help those who specialize in helping others.

The following resources should be a part of every community's effort to address vicarious or secondary trauma among first responders:

■ **Ohio ASSIST** - This partnership between the Ohio Departments of Public Safety and Mental Health and Addiction Services offers free, three-day Post-Critical Incident Seminars that gives participants the opportunity to talk about their trauma and the effects it has had on them, their families, their agency and their communities. Participants meet with clinicians familiar with public safety in a one-on-one environment to discuss any issues or concerns they might have, and in small groups to have conversations with other first responders who have been involved in similar incidents. This peer-connection allows first responders to see that they are not alone in their issues and concerns and that they are having a normal reaction to an abnormal circumstance.

■ **Crisis Awareness** - This training provides participants examples of signs that they or a co-worker, family member or friend may be in crisis after a traumatic event brought about by an incident at work, personal life, or as the result of the cumulative effects of exposure to traumatic situations. Additionally, it offers techniques to assist the person in crisis. Considerable time is focused on addiction and addiction-related issues, and how they affect public safety personnel.

■ **After the Call** - This training provides public safety agency administrators with ideas, concepts, and techniques they can use to help themselves during and after traumatic incidents so they may provide guidance and oversight.

■ **First Responders' Bridge** - This free program supports all active and retired first responders and their families, loved ones, or caregivers experiencing, or have experienced, a traumatic or life-altering event. The Bridge promotes personal growth and healthy relationships with a multi-faceted approach in a safe and confidential environment. The Bridge provides confidential, expense-free retreats for first responders who have experienced a traumatic or life-altering event, or who are experiencing depression, anxiety, or post-traumatic stress.



Office of First Responder Wellness

This newly formed office at the Ohio Department of Public Safety offers programs and resources to help first responders build their resilience by increasing awareness about risk factors and warning signs, talking with each other, and building healthy coping strategies.

Contact Steve Click at Steve.Click@dps.ohio.gov for more information.

Data

With a state as geographically and demographically diverse as Ohio, public safety providers must collect and analyze data to ensure that they are meeting the needs of the communities they serve. In addition to establishing data and data collection systems, communities can connect with partners such as local nonprofit organizations and state and federal agencies. For example, the Ohio Department of Public Safety, including the Division of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and the Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS), provide communities with data and analytical support. The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) provides additional support and funds specialized docket programs to manage high-risk, high-need adult and juvenile offenders in the community to reduce recidivism.



ONIC & RecoveryOhio Monthly Ohio Drug Trends Call



The Ohio Narcotics Intelligence Center (ONIC) and RecoveryOhio hosted a series of collaborative monthly calls in September 2020 aimed at combating the narcotics crisis from multiple angles. The ONIC/ RecoveryOhio Monthly Drug Trends Call was created to provide decision-makers across diverse public sector partnerships with information-sharing opportunities and actionable intelligence on emerging trends, patterns, insights, and outcomes related to Ohio's narcotics epidemic. The calls feature a group of reoccurring core presenters, including public health, law enforcement, and regulatory agencies, as well as featured speakers selected from areas of expertise relevant to emerging trends. The call is structured, moderated, recorded, and accompanied by a visual presentation, and all materials are provided to attendees after the call. The calls are typically held the third week of the month.

To be added to the attendee list, send a request to ONIC at ONIC@dps.ohio.gov.



Check List:

- ☐ Attend the Ohio Narcotics Intelligence Center (ONIC) and RecoveryOhio Monthly Drug Trends call. Email ONIC@dps.ohio.gov to join.
- ☐ Urge your county officials to "Step Up" and join the growing number of counties that have passed resolutions in support of the initiative. To get started, follow the steps listed at <https://mha.ohio.gov/Schools-and-Communities/Criminal-Justice/Stepping-Up>.
- ☐ Identify ways to collect and share data with others in the community.
- ☐ Establish a mentoring relationship with a like agency.
- ☐ Consider creating a local quick response team (QRT) or similar outreach team. Refer to the previous version of this action guide or visit QRT National at <https://o2sl.com/> for more information.
- ☐ Help first responders identify physical and emotional signs of trauma and stress in a co-worker, family member, friend, or employee, or themselves with Crisis Awareness Training and QPR First Responder Suicide Awareness and Prevention Training.
- ☐ Link first responders to state resources for post-event trauma support through technical assistance and trainings such as "After the Call", and self-care training, the Ohio ASSIST program and the First Responder's Bridge.



Resource Lists by Category

Strengthen Partnership Resources:

- Ohio Department of Health [overdose data](#).
- Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services [Research and Data](#).
- [Ohio Injury Prevention Partnership](#).
- [Ohio Healthy Youth Environments Survey \(OHYES!\)](#).
- [Youth Risk Behavior Survey \(YRBS\)](#).
- [Overdose Fatality Review Committee link](#).

End Stigma Resources:

- **Beat the Stigma** is a campaign launched in partnership with RecoveryOhio and the Ohio Opioid Education Alliance and is being funded through statewide public private partnerships with one goal: Beating the Stigma associated with substance use disorders and mental health conditions. There are resources and opportunities to be shared at every level in the community.
- **NAMI Ohio** improves the quality of life and ensures dignity and respect for persons with serious mental illness and offers support to their families and close friends. Call 1-800-686-2646.
- **Mental Health America of Ohio** transforms how people think about mental illness, makes it easier to get help, and gives people the support they need to get better and stay better.

Sustain and Enhance Prevention Practices Resources:

- Health and Opioid Abuse Prevention Education Curriculum developed by Wright State University is a series of lessons, assessments, and learning materials to develop students' functional knowledge, attitudes, and necessary skills to prevent drug use. Email HOPEcurriculum@wright.edu for more details.

- **Youth and Adult Mental Wellness Toolkit** provides access to resources that can help both children and adults cope, heal, strengthen, and grow. It includes all the tools needed to support an awareness campaign with built-in education and stigma-reduction components, aimed at changing attitudes and strengthening supports for those in need. The toolkit includes downloadable educational resources, including videos, for parents and educators.
- **The Ohio Youth-Led Prevention Network (OYLPN)** is a network of youth groups across the state who are committed to the cornerstones of youth-led prevention, peer prevention, positive youth development, and community service.
- **Sources of Strength Peer Leaders** training is being introduced in many schools across the state. These groups are comprised of a team of individuals who leverage their personal and collective leadership qualities, as well as their social influence, in leading the charge in norming and culture change campaigns using strength-based messages to impact multiple issues, including suicide. They are led by trained adult advisors who support, mentor, and assist the peer leaders in their work.
- **The G.A.P. (Through Grief, Advocating for Prevention) Network** was created to bring information, education, advocacy opportunities, networking, and support to individuals who have lost a loved one to an overdose, and to family engagement groups who are working to end addiction to prescription drugs and opiates in Ohio.
- **Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation**.
- **Generation Rx** includes education on the dangers of prescription medication misuse.
- Be Present. Find powerful tools to help youth and adults be there for each other: <https://bepresentohio.org/>.
- **ABC's of Mental Health**.
- Talk. They Hear You. Why You Should Talk to Your Child About Alcohol and Other Drugs: <https://www.samhsa.gov/underage-drinking/parent-resources/why-you-should-talk-your-child>.

Strengthen Partnership Resources:

- [Naloxone.Ohio.Gov](#).
- Ohio Department of Health, **Stop Overdoses**: ODH's naloxone campaign features Ohioans who have been saved by naloxone. Hear stories from individuals and their families about the dangers of opiate abuse and find resources for naloxone in your community.

Linking People to Treatment Resources:

- **Get Help** tab on OhioMHAS's website.
- Take Charge Ohio: **Take Charge Ohio - Home**.
- Online Medicaid Enrollment: **Ohio Benefits**.
- The Ohio Department of Insurance Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Toolkit: **Mental Health Benefits Toolkit**.
- **Treatment Finder**.

Help Sustain Recovery Resources:

- Peer Recovery Support: www.mha.ohio.gov/peersupport.
- **Housing assistance**.
- **Employment services**.
- **Wraparound services**.
- Ohio Family and Children First: <https://www.fcf.ohio.gov/>.
- List of **support groups by county**.


Supporting First Responders and Public Safety Community Resources:

- OhioMHAS Resources for First Responders: mha.ohio.gov.
- The Bridge: <https://firstrespondersbridge.org/>.
- Critical Incident Response: <https://www.fopohio.org/>.
- **The Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS)** provides several grant opportunities. One such federal grant program that supports local efforts to provide treatment is the Residential Substance Abuse Treatment Grant Program (RSAT).
- **Division of EMS Grants Program** offers five different types of grants. These grants seek to improve and enhance EMS and trauma patient care in Ohio by paying for equipment, training, and research.

Contacts

Websites

Important Numbers

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Notes



RecoveryOhio



June **2023**

RecoveryOhio
77 S. High St., 30th floor
Columbus, OH 43215



MIKE DEWINE
GOVERNOR OF OHIO



JON HUSTED
LT. GOVERNOR OF OHIO

www.RecoveryOhio.gov