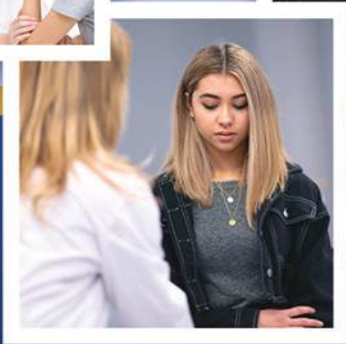




RecoveryOhio 

RECOVERY
Recovery is Possible.



2024 Annual Review

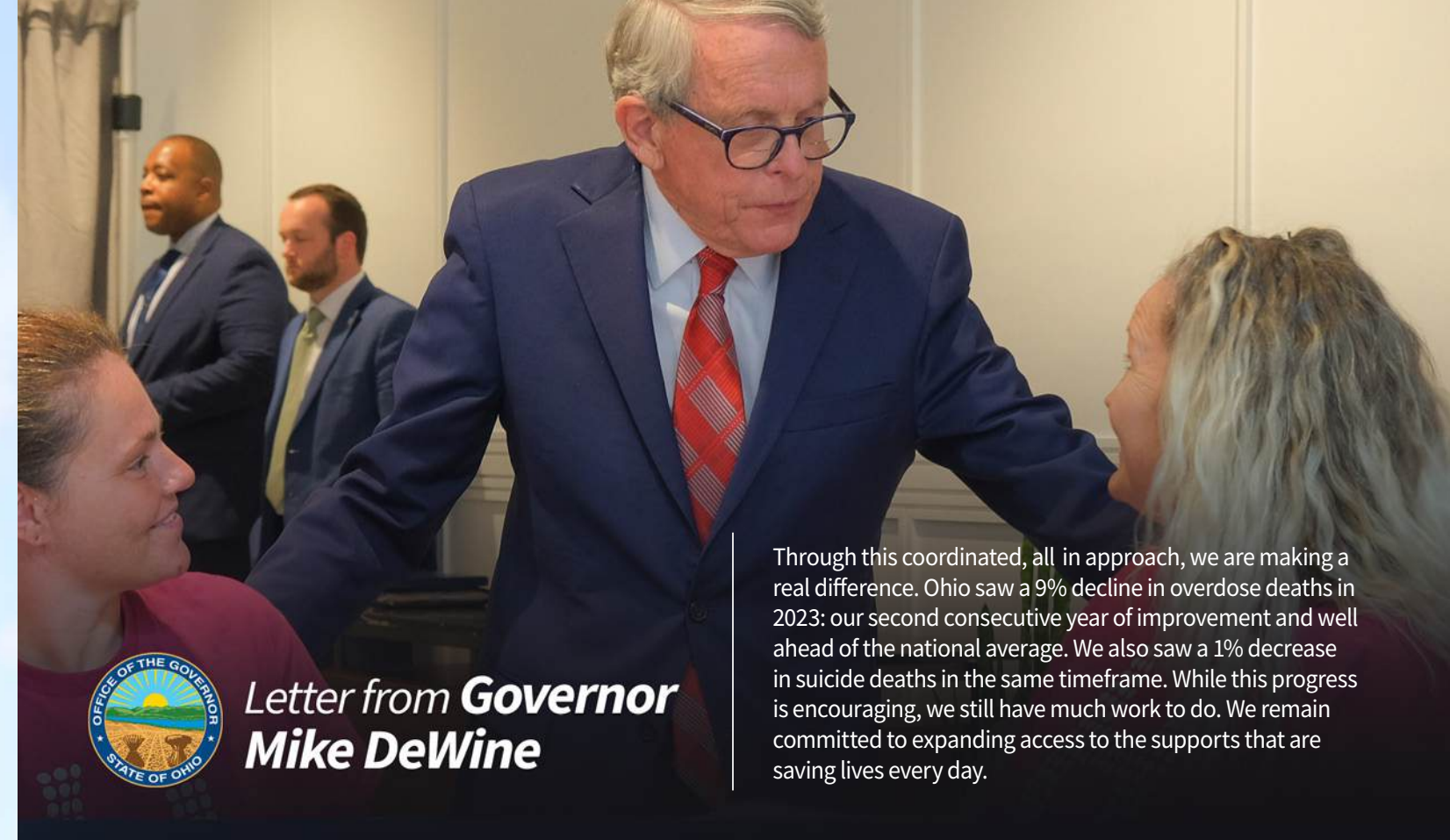
"My administration, RecoveryOhio, and the RecoveryOhio Advisory Council are committed to addressing the behavioral health needs in this state so that every Ohioan can live up to their God-given potential."

– Mike DeWine, Governor of Ohio



MIKE DEWINE
GOVERNOR OF OHIO

www.RecoveryOhio.gov



Letter from Governor Mike DeWine

Through this coordinated, all in approach, we are making a real difference. Ohio saw a 9% decline in overdose deaths in 2023: our second consecutive year of improvement and well ahead of the national average. We also saw a 1% decrease in suicide deaths in the same timeframe. While this progress is encouraging, we still have much work to do. We remain committed to expanding access to the supports that are saving lives every day.

Dear Fellow Ohioans:

I am pleased to present the 2024 RecoveryOhio Annual Review, which reflects yet another year of progress in our work to support people in recovery and their journeys toward wellness.

My first official act upon taking office as Governor was to create RecoveryOhio. The initiative was designed to align the work of various state departments, boards, and commissions to address substance use disorders, promote recovery, and support the mental health of Ohioans. Today, RecoveryOhio works to 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 agencies to stop illicit drugs at the source.

This year's annual review highlights the efforts of our administration and our dedicated partners – including community organizations, healthcare providers, and individuals with experience living through recovery – whose collaboration has been instrumental in driving meaningful change. RecoveryOhio also receives guidance from the RecoveryOhio Advisory Council, ensuring a well-rounded and informed response to the challenges facing Ohioans.

Over the past year, RecoveryOhio adopted a set of bold and innovative strategic initiatives to strengthen Ohio's behavioral health system. This includes the creation of a predictive analytics tool to identify communities at heightened risk for overdoses in time for local leaders to step in and save lives. It also includes the development of a Continuum of Care Portal, which will serve as an online hub, connecting Ohioans with mental health and addiction services across the state. These efforts and others still to come will ensure Ohio remains at the forefront of using data-driven solutions to save lives and improve outcomes for individuals and families.

RecoveryOhio has also continued to expand its reach – further enhancing access to life-saving resources, such as naloxone, increasing pathways to treatment and recovery, and fostering recovery-friendly workplaces.

Very respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature of Mike DeWine in black ink.

Mike DeWine,
Governor of Ohio

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AWARENESS & Education

For individuals facing mental health and substance use challenges, recovery is most achievable with the support of their communities. Unfortunately, cultural stigmas against people seeking help can create barriers to recovery. As part of our ongoing efforts to support a culture of recovery in Ohio, the significance of reducing stigma cannot be overstated.

RecoveryOhio has made great strides over the past year, but the battle to end stigma continues. This section of our annual review highlights the numerous efforts we have undertaken to lead this effort by challenging stereotypes, dispelling myths, and cultivating a culture of acceptance.

Beat The Stigma

BEAT THE STIGMA

Beat the Stigma is a statewide public awareness campaign designed to challenge perceptions about mental health and addiction. Launched in November 2021, the campaign is a collaborative effort between Governor DeWine, RecoveryOhio, and the Ohio Opioid Education Alliance.

In 2024, Beat the Stigma introduced its final round of multimedia advertisements across broadcast television, streaming platforms, radio, outdoor advertising, and digital and social media. Using the format of a fictional game show, Beat the Stigma engages audiences with trivia and other challenges that encourage them to rethink their understanding of mental health and addiction.

2024 Highlights:

- 96% of Ohioans have heard of Beat the Stigma.
- 89% of participants who started the Beat the Stigma game completed it..
- 81% of Ohioans expressed a desire to learn more about mental health and substance misuse.

8,203

individuals engaged with the Beat the Stigma booth at the Ohio State Fair.



LouSeal and Krash from the Columbus Clippers visit the Beat the Stigma booth.

Pledge to End Stigma

PLEDGE TO END STIGMA

YOU CAN TAKE THE PLEDGE AT RECOVERYOHIO.GOV



RecoveryOhio

RecoveryOhio.gov

To further advance Ohio’s efforts to reduce the stigma of recovery, RecoveryOhio re-launched the Pledge to End Stigma campaign in May 2024. The campaign calls for Ohioans to sign their name as a pledge of their commitment to lifting up those in recovery.

The campaign aims to foster community-wide compassion and encouragement for individuals and families impacted by substance use and mental health challenges. Since the campaign’s inception, 175 individuals have taken the pledge.

Mental Health Awareness Month

May is Mental Health Awareness Month



Mental Health Awareness Month, observed each May, brings together organizations, advocates, and communities across Ohio to raise awareness about mental health, promote understanding and acceptance, and reduce the stigma surrounding mental illnesses. Activities include events, workshops, campaigns, and initiatives emphasizing mental health awareness, self-care, and access to services.

In 2024, RecoveryOhio and the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services created a new toolkit to help local Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health boards and mental health providers increase awareness in their communities. The toolkit offers materials to support outreach efforts and amplify the message of hope and recovery throughout Ohio.

Mental Health Day at the Ohio State Fair

On Friday, July 26, 2024, the Ohio State Fair hosted RecoveryOhio’s Mental Health Day – a celebration of mental health awareness and resources on one of the state’s biggest stages.



The RecoveryOhio team handed out bags at the State Fair in July.

Volunteers from RecoveryOhio, the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, the Ohio Department of Insurance, the Ohio Department of Commerce, and Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities distributed “Mental Health Day” drawstring bags filled with information about Ohio’s mental health resources.



- The RecoveryOhio logo appeared on the Ohio State Fair mobile app, which had 12,700 users in 2024.
- RecoveryOhio’s branding was prominently displayed on 11,000 printed Daily Maps and Schedules.
- RecoveryOhio was recognized as a sponsor on the Ohio State Fair website, which received over 2 million views in 2024.
- Posts on the Ohio State Fair’s Facebook and Instagram pages reached 14,769 people, garnering 15,266 impressions, 293 likes, and 21 shares.
- A daily email blast to 111,000 subscribers included information about RecoveryOhio’s partnership with the Fair.

enCompass and Responding to Addiction Training

Since 2021, RecoveryOhio has sponsored enCompass: A Comprehensive Training on Navigating Addiction, a program developed by the Addiction Policy Forum. Designed for those supporting loved ones with substance use disorders, the training provides in-depth education on addiction, treatment options, communication strategies, and self-care practices.

Research shows that enCompass significantly improves participants’ understanding of addiction, builds confidence in supporting loved ones, and reduces stigma by challenging stereotypes.

In 2024, RecoveryOhio expanded its educational

programming by offering the new Responding to Addiction training. These programs complement enCompass by offering tools to help families, communities, and professionals address addiction with greater compassion and effectiveness in a condensed timeframe.

Also in 2024, in partnership with the Addiction Policy Forum, RecoveryOhio offered instructor trainings to Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health boards throughout the state to encourage growth in the number of enCompass or Responding to Addiction instructors. This emphasis resulted in 49 new instructors being certified this year.

enCompass Trainings

Year	County-wide	Statewide	Individuals Trained	Instructors Trained
2021	21	6	560	8
2022	0	4	1,359	23
2023	9	1	192	37
2024	26	7	712	49
Total:	56	18	2,823	117



RecoveryOhio Director Aimee Shadwick (right), Jessica Hulsey with the Addiction Policy Forum (middle), and Valerie Earnshaw with the University of Delaware (left) at the Anti-Stigma Institute in Washington in October 2024



Overdose Awareness Day

Overdose Awareness Day, observed annually on August 31, serves to increase awareness of drug overdoses, honor those who have lost their lives or experienced lasting harm, reduce stigma surrounding substance use disorders, and promote policies and actions to prevent overdoses and save lives.

In 2024, over 33 counties across Ohio hosted events such as vigils, rallies, educational programs, and memorials to commemorate those impacted by overdose. The day also emphasized the importance of tools like naloxone and encouraged individuals struggling with substance use to seek support and resources.

Ohio has formally recognized Overdose Awareness Day since June 8, 2021, when Governor DeWine signed the annual recognition into law through Senate Bill 30. In 2022, RecoveryOhio introduced the Naloxone.Ohio.gov website, providing an easy way for Ohioans to access free naloxone. In 2024, this website recorded 56,810 page visits.

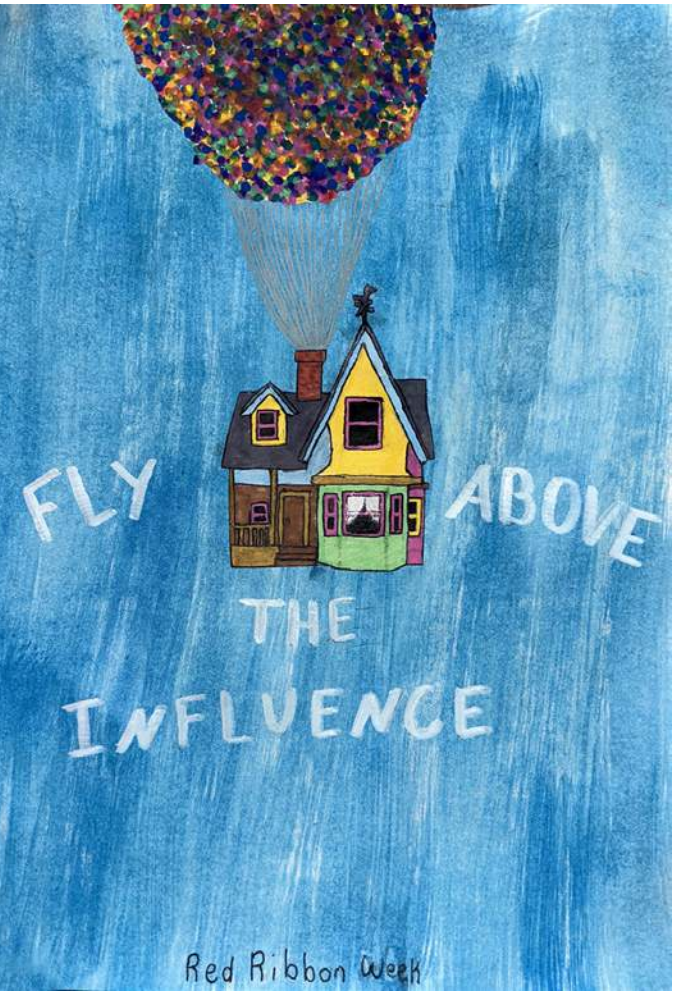
2024 also marked the launch of the new RecoveryOhio Overdose Awareness Day toolkit, in cooperation with the Ohio Department of Health and the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, featuring social media posts, flyers, and digital ads for statewide use. The toolkit helped drive 5,389 unique visits to the Overdose Awareness Day resources on the RecoveryOhio website, expanding outreach and awareness efforts across Ohio.



Red Ribbon Campaign

The RecoveryOhio Red Ribbon Campaign engages students across Ohio in raising awareness about substance use prevention and fostering conversations about healthy choices. Through partnerships with schools and communities, the campaign highlights the importance of early prevention efforts to build a healthier future for Ohio’s youth.

In 2024, RecoveryOhio began an annual Red Ribbon Campaign poster contest for high school students. The contest challenged students to spread the message of staying drug-free by creating an eye-catching poster that encouraged others to live a healthy, drug-free lifestyle.



The winning poster from the 2024 Red Ribbon Contest was submitted by Victoria Moore, Springfield, Ohio



Cincinnati Reds Partnership

Since 2019, the Cincinnati Reds have collaborated with Governor DeWine and RecoveryOhio to raise awareness about mental health and substance use disorders among baseball fans.

RecoveryOhio Director Aimee Shadwick and Deputy Director Sarah Hauck with the 988 staff who were recognized at the August Reds game.

In 2024, the Cincinnati Reds hosted games in May for Mental Health Awareness Month and in August for Overdose Awareness and Recovery Awareness Months.

These games feature discounted tickets, on-field ceremonies recognizing care providers, and radio PSAs highlighting the importance of mental health and recovery. The RecoveryOhio logo is prominently displayed throughout the ballpark, and information about RecoveryOhio is featured on the Reds Country Cares website. Fans also view a special video message from Governor DeWine during the game, reinforcing the message of hope and support for those affected by mental health and substance use challenges.



2024 Highlights:

- The Reds Country Cares website recorded over 3,000 views.
- Five 30 second radio PSAs aired in May and August.
- RecoveryOhio had four concourse signs displayed during each awareness month.
- 11,474 pre sold tickets were scanned at the May game.
- 6,435 pre sold tickets were scanned at the August game.

Recovery Within Reach

Launched in 2022 with the support of RecoveryOhio, the Ohio Department of Commerce created a Recovery Within Reach training program to educate licensed financial professionals across Ohio on the financial impacts of addiction, which research suggests can cost families thousands of dollars annually.

The first-of-its-kind training empowers financial professionals to better support clients dealing with substance use disorder in their families.

Developed with the support of Futurety, Measurement Resources, and Paul Werth Associates, the initiative demonstrates Ohio's commitment to tackling the opioid crisis from multiple angles. The \$1.5 million educational and outreach effort features an interactive treatment map, public service announcements, and in-person and online training sessions. RecoveryOhio's leadership played a key role in shaping this groundbreaking program.



In 2024, the Ohio Department of Commerce received the prestigious national PR Daily Nonprofit Communications Award in the Multi-Channel Campaign category for the Recovery Within Reach initiative. The department was honored at the Yale Club in New York City.

Also in 2024, Nationwide Financial required all its financial advisers to complete the course, leading the Department of Commerce to begin development on a version for national distribution. The national course is expected to launch in early 2025, further expanding Ohio's influence in addressing the opioid epidemic.



Andrea Seidt, Commissioner of the Division of Securities (right), and Mikaela Hunt, Chief Communications Officer of the Ohio Department of Commerce (left) accepted the PR Daily Nonprofit Communications Award at an event in New York City.

WORKFORCE Development

In the dynamic landscape of recovery, this section of the annual review directs our focus toward a critical facet that often defines the journey to sustained well-being – workforce development.

The transformative innovations referenced below underscore our commitment to empowering individuals on their path to recovery through meaningful employment.

As we reflect on the intersection of recovery and workforce development, we celebrate the triumphs of those who have found not only employment but also a renewed sense of purpose and self-worth. Simultaneously, we acknowledge the challenges faced by individuals seeking to re-enter the workforce after overcoming various barriers. These initiatives are testaments to our resolve to address these challenges and foster environments where every Ohioan can thrive.

Recovery Friendly Workplace Program

In August 2024, Governor DeWine and RecoveryOhio announced the launch of the Ohio Recovery Friendly Workplace Program, a new initiative designed to support both employees in recovery and the businesses that employ them. This program creates job opportunities for people recovering from substance use disorders or mental health conditions, combats workplace stigma, and provides businesses with tailored training and resources to foster a supportive, healthy work environment. By addressing the critical need for stable employment in recovery, this initiative strengthens Ohio's workforce while promoting lasting recovery and well-being.

To qualify as an Ohio Recovery Friendly Workplace, businesses have many options for the types of practices they can implement. Examples include creating policies that support hiring people in recovery and working with their local Mental Health and Recovery Board to share job opportunities.

The Ohio Recovery Friendly Workplace program also encourages businesses to provide support systems that help employees feel comfortable requesting help if they are dealing with addiction or mental health challenges. Support systems could include:

- Training leaders to identify signs of substance use and encouraging them to help employees seek treatment.
- Offering access to life saving naloxone and training staff on how to use it in an emergency.
- Providing mental health and wellness education programs for employees.
- Promoting the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline to employees.

Companies that implement recovery-friendly practices as part of their everyday operations and core values can apply to earn the official designation as an Ohio Recovery Friendly Workplace.

This initiative was launched with a large press conference held at the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County. Featured was Governor DeWine who spoke on the importance of supporting the workforce with recovery friendly practices. Also in attendance was Amanda Hall, an individual in recovery who was initially hired at JBM Packaging, a Cincinnati-based business, through a "fair chance" program. JBM Packaging is part of the Hamilton County Recovery Friendly program as well as the Ohio Recovery Friendly initiative. Since her hire, Amanda has risen through the ranks, being promoted to the position of Talent Acquisition and Training Specialist.

Since its launch, interest in the Ohio Recovery Friendly Workplace program has grown. By the end of 2024, 55 businesses had completed the process, with many more businesses working toward earning the Ohio Recovery Friendly Workplace designation.

More information about this program is available at RecoveryFriendlyWorkplace.MHA.Ohio.gov.



Photo from the Recovery Friendly Launch event in Cincinnati, Ohio.



Amanda Hall, an individual in recovery who was hired at Cincinnati-based JBM Packaging through a similar program in Hamilton County, speaks at the Ohio Recovery Friendly Workplace launch.

OHIO RECOVERY FRIENDLY WORKPLACE

Supporting Recovery-Friendly Workplaces: Substance Use Disorder Loan Repayment and Workplace Safety Programs

Two key resources helping businesses become Recovery-Friendly Workplaces are the Ohio Substance Use Disorder Professional Loan Repayment Program (SUDLRP) and the Bureau of Workers' Compensation's Substance Use Recovery and Workplace Safety Program.

The **Ohio SUDLRP** expands access to treatment by offering loan repayment assistance to clinicians working in underserved areas, including Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs). Providers commit to two years of service, accept Medicare and Medicaid, and offer care regardless of a patient's ability to pay. Full-time participants can receive up to \$50,000, while part-time participants can earn up to \$25,000.

In 2024, the Ohio Department of Health contracted with 31 providers, disbursing \$550,000 in loan repayments.



The **Substance Use Recovery and Workplace Safety Program** addresses workforce challenges posed by substance use. Employers can receive reimbursements for initiatives such as policy development, employee and supervisor training, drug testing, and participation in the Better You! Better Ohio! wellness program.

In 2024, enrollment grew by over 40% to nearly 1,800 employers, with more than 500 reimbursements averaging \$1,100 each. Plans for 2025 include adding substance use assessments as a reimbursable expense for employers with recovery-friendly "second chance" policies.

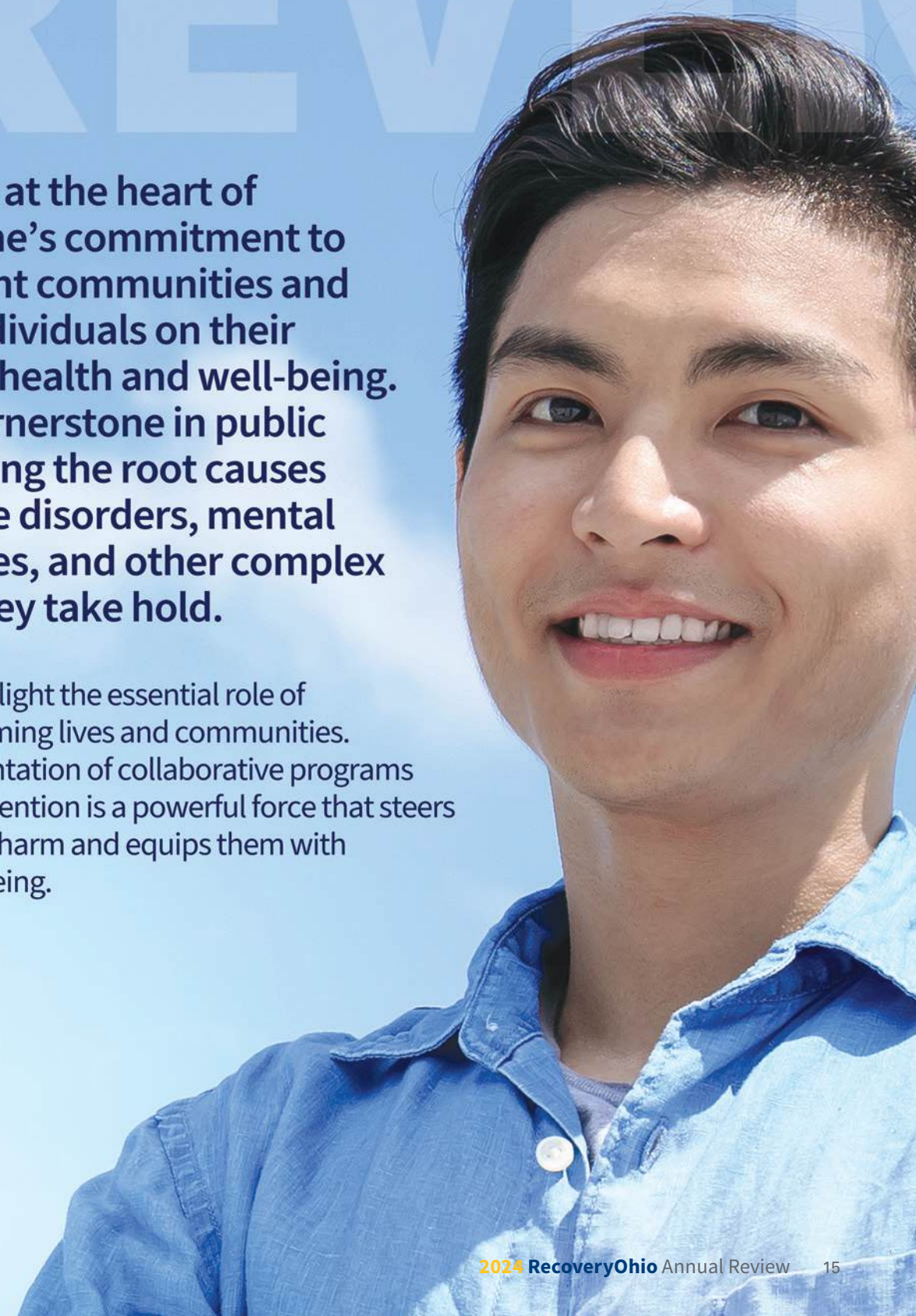
**Better You.
Better Ohio!**
Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation



PREVENTION

Prevention lies at the heart of Governor DeWine's commitment to fostering resilient communities and empowering individuals on their journey toward health and well-being. It serves as a cornerstone in public health, addressing the root causes of substance use disorders, mental health challenges, and other complex issues before they take hold.

In this section, we highlight the essential role of prevention in transforming lives and communities. Through the implementation of collaborative programs and partnerships, prevention is a powerful force that steers individuals away from harm and equips them with tools for lasting well-being.



Suicide Prevention

Despite the state seeing a decrease in suicides in 2023, approximately five people still die by suicide every day in Ohio. Many people face stress, mental illness, and suicidal thoughts, but these issues often go unrecognized until it is too late. Suicide is a public health crisis that requires proven solutions to better protect and care for those struggling with suicidal thoughts.

The Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation, in partnership with RecoveryOhio and the Health Policy Institute of Ohio, developed the 2024–2026 Suicide Prevention Plan. Introduced in January 2024, the plan unites stakeholders across the state to collaborate on preventing suicide, reducing stigma, encouraging help-seeking behaviors, and saving lives.



National Drug Take Back Days

Proper disposal of unused medications is essential to prevent them from being misused. Research consistently shows that prescription drug abuse often begins with access to medications stored in the homes of family and friends.

RecoveryOhio plays a vital role in supporting drug take-back events, which are held annually in April and October across communities in Ohio.



April 2024	October 2024
306 participating law enforcement agencies	310 participating law enforcement agencies
293 collection sites	278 collection sites
41,064 pounds collected	40,995 pounds collected



Ohio ranked 4th in the nation for the number of pounds collected during both the April and October events.

Since the inception of Drug Take Back Day in 2018, Ohio has collected an impressive 962,285 pounds of unneeded medications.

HARM Reduction

As part of Ohio’s harm reduction strategy, RecoveryOhio has joined with state agencies to expand access to overdose reversal medications, as well as access to other life-saving tools.

This effort includes partnerships with traditional organizations, such as the Project DAWN (Deaths Avoided With Naloxone) network, and nontraditional stakeholders, including the Turnpike Commission, colleges and universities, and the Ohio Department of Transportation.

These partnerships ensure that life-saving overdose prevention tools reach communities across Ohio. Key strategies for naloxone and fentanyl test strip distribution are outlined on the following pages.



Naloxone

Naloxone reverses opioid overdoses by blocking the effects of opioids and restoring breathing. Safely used by medical professionals for over 40 years, it has no abuse potential and is harmless when given to someone not overdosing.

RecoveryOhio offers access to life-saving naloxone for free for all Ohioans. For information on ordering and administering naloxone, visit Naloxone.Ohio.gov.



Naloxone Access Cabinets

In 2024, RecoveryOhio, the Ohio Department of Higher Education, the Ohio Department of Health, the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, the Ohio Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission, and the Ohio Department of Transportation, collaborated to provide emergency naloxone access cabinets for installation on public and private college campuses, and at Ohio rest areas and service plazas along the Ohio Turnpike. The wall-mounted cabinets, similar to Automated External Defibrillators, provide access to life-saving naloxone.

Naloxone Statistics
Jan. 2024 – Dec. 2024

- **371,076**
Total number naloxone units distributed
- **18,079**
Total number reported overdose reversals
- **148,273**
Total number people trained on overdose response

2024 Naloxone Access Cabinet Totals

- **261 cabinets**
at 58 institutions of higher education
- **14 cabinets**
at service plazas
- **130 cabinets**
at 65 rest areas



Naloxone Vending Machines

In 2024, RecoveryOhio, the Ohio Department of Health, and the Ohio Department of Transportation launched a pilot program to add naloxone vending machines at four rest areas across Ohio – further expanding free and convenient access to this life-saving medication.



Project DAWN

Project DAWN (Deaths Avoided With Naloxone) is a public health initiative coordinated out of the Ohio Department of Health, with support from RecoveryOhio, designed to reduce opioid overdose deaths through the distribution of naloxone and the provision of education on its use. The program was established in response to Ohio’s opioid crisis, which continues to impact many communities across the state and nation.

As of December 1, 2024, Project DAWN comprises 216 registered programs, collectively operating 595 naloxone distribution sites across 83 of Ohio’s 88 counties.

*Project DAWN also reported **15,423** known overdose reversals in 2024.*

Fentanyl Test Strips

In response to the growing prevalence of fentanyl-related overdoses, Ohio has increasingly promoted fentanyl test strips as a harm reduction tool to detect the presence of fentanyl in drugs. Fentanyl is a potent synthetic opioid that is often mixed with other drugs, such as heroin or cocaine, without the user’s knowledge, leading to a higher risk of overdose.

Fentanyl test strips offer a way for individuals to inspect drugs for the presence of fentanyl and make informed decisions about their use.

County Health Departments, harm reduction providers, and health care providers are just a few of the types of organizations that have ordered fentanyl test strips from the State since April 2023.



Total Fentanyl Test Strips ordered from the State 4/27/23 – 12/31/2024: **1,687,800**

TREATMENT & Recovery Supports

This section highlights the essential role of treatment in recovery supports, showcasing interventions, therapies, and care that support individuals on their journey to healing.

Over the past year, RecoveryOhio has prioritized expanding access, improving quality, and fostering innovative, recovery-oriented treatments tailored to meet the needs of all Ohioans. This review reflects our commitment to building an inclusive and effective treatment landscape, empowering individuals to reclaim their lives and achieve sustained well-being.

Peer Support

Certified peer supporters in Ohio use their lived experience to help others facing mental health or substance use challenges. Ohio offers three certifications: Adult, Family, and Youth/Young Adult.

To become certified, individuals must complete 40 hours of training or three years of verified peer service experience, pass an exam, agree to a code of ethics, and clear FBI and BCI background checks. Additional requirements include 16 hours of eBased Academy courses and online certification through an eLicense portal.

Certified peers are supervised by trained professionals and must earn 30 education credits every two years to maintain their certification.

New Peer Support Certification Statistics, Fiscal Year 2024:

- **1,567**
Certified Peer Recovery Supporters
- **15**
Certified Youth Peer Supporters
- **91**
Certified Family Peer Supporters

Total Certified Peer Supporters (as of Nov. 12, 2024):

- **3,204**
Certified Peer Recovery Supporters
- **36**
Certified Youth Peer Supporters
- **194**
Certified Family Peer Supporters



Medication for Opioid Use Disorder

RecoveryOhio was instrumental in supporting efforts by the State Medical Board of Ohio to align with the state's administrative rules for medications for opioid use disorder with federal law updates. In October 2024, the board approved amendments designed to improve access to treatment while ensuring the safety of vulnerable patients. These changes reflect a comprehensive approach to addressing opioid use disorder and include the following key updates:

- Modernized terminology and the removal of the DATA 2000 waiver requirement for prescribing buprenorphine, in line with federal standards.
- Expanded naloxone accessibility through resources like [Naloxone.Ohio.gov](https://www.naloxone.ohio.gov).
- Authorization for office-based opioid treatment to begin before completing full assessments and lab tests, facilitating faster access to care.
- Revised protocols allowing continued buprenorphine treatment even in the absence of psychosocial interventions.
- Permitting higher buprenorphine dosages, up to 32 mg/day, with specialist oversight.
- Allowing methadone use to relieve withdrawal symptoms as permitted by federal regulations.
- Simplified documentation and patient assessment requirements to reduce administrative barriers.

Emergency Department Comprehensive Care

In 2018, the Emergency Department Comprehensive Care program was developed as a pilot project for health systems to identify and expand services for individuals who presented in the emergency department with substance use disorder. Since then, the program has continued to improve health systems and clinician expertise to provide care for opioid use disorder and substance use disorder by building and implementing health system clinical capacity to screen, diagnose, and link individuals to trauma-formed, longitudinal care in the inpatient and primary care setting.

2024 TOTALS:

- **7,739**
patients screened
- **242**
patients transitioned to care improving pathways to treatment
- **2,082**
prescribers and staff members trained
- **475**
patients received a naloxone kit

TOTALS: 2018 through 2024

- **839,371**
patients screened
- **19,579**
patients transitioned to care improving pathways to treatment
- **16,597**
prescribers and staff members trained
- **8,986**
patients received a naloxone kit



CRIMINAL *Justice & Public Safety*

In this section, you will find an overview of RecoveryOhio’s endeavors over the past year to promote alternatives to incarceration, expand access to treatment within correctional facilities, and support the reentry process for individuals seeking recovery.

While acknowledging the often-complex intricacies at the intersection of criminal justice, public safety, and recovery, we are driven by the belief that Ohioans deserve the chance for redemption and recovery. This review encapsulates our collaborative efforts to forge a system where justice is restorative, and recovery is achievable.



THE
STEPPINGUP
INITIATIVE

Stepping Up

The Stepping Up Initiative is a national effort to reduce the incarceration of individuals with mental illnesses, often paired with substance use disorders, by connecting them to treatment and support services.

RecoveryOhio participates in local county calls and shares resources to support counties in implementing Stepping Up strategies.

Drug Task Forces

In 2024, Governor DeWine’s RecoveryOhio Law Enforcement Fund awarded over \$2.1 million in grants to 35 drug task forces. These funds support efforts to identify major drug traffickers, dismantle large trafficking organizations, disrupt the flow of money and drugs from international cartels, and prevent the sale of illegal narcotics to individuals with substance use disorders.

Ohio Narcotics Intelligence Center



The Ohio Narcotics Intelligence Center (ONIC), established in 2019 by Governor DeWine, operates under the Ohio Department of Public Safety with four statewide locations.

Through its RecoveryOhio Monthly Drug Trends Call, the ONIC provides key stakeholders with actionable intelligence on emerging drug trends and offers a platform for coordinated information sharing. Additionally, the Quarterly National Drug Trends Call has expanded Ohio’s efforts to collaborate nationally on drug trade intelligence, providing a broader understanding of the factors influencing drug distribution.

The Ohio State Highway Patrol:
Operation New Beginnings

The Ohio State Highway Patrol’s “Operation New Beginnings” program is a collaborative initiative between local mental health and substance abuse providers.

The program focuses on distributing informational resources to individuals arrested for impaired driving, aiming to reduce recidivism and promote recovery.

Launched in 2023 with 11 counties, the program has grown significantly, expanding to **49 counties** as of December 2024.

By integrating treatment resources into the justice process, Operation New Beginnings offers individuals the opportunity for recovery while addressing public safety needs.



Operation BRIDGE

Operation BRIDGE, led by the Ohio Department of Public Safety, unites law enforcement and substance use treatment in a coordinated effort to reduce drug supply and demand while prioritizing treatment access.

Chillicothe Police Officer Matthew Shipley and his K9 partner, Roo, prepare to search a vehicle during Operation BRIDGE in Ross County.

It operates on the premise that disrupting drug supply can trigger dangerous behaviors in individuals with substance use disorder, such as seeking drugs from an unfamiliar source.

Key components of Operation BRIDGE include:

Traffic Enforcement/Drug Interdiction:

Federal, state, and local law enforcement collaborate for targeted enforcement, focusing on drug suppliers, felony warrants, bulk narcotics, and illegal firearms.

Outreach:

Law enforcement and outreach teams connect individuals to treatment, distribute naloxone, organize prescription take-back events, and provide prevention resources during community events.

Enforcement 2024

Traffic Stops Initiated	1,007
Felony Arrests (Non-Drug Related)	27
Felony Arrests (Drug Related)	48
Misdemeanor Arrests (Non-Drug Related)	18
Misdemeanor Arrests (Drug Related)	46
Search Warrants	7
Criminal Cases Initiated (Non-Drug Related)	17
Criminal Cases Initiated (Drug Related)	33
Citations Issued	261
Guns Seized	17
Warrants Served	51
Devices Submitted for Digital Forensic Exam	5

Seizures 2024

Cocaine	237.17 grams
Marijuana	17.56 pounds
Fentanyl	654.4 grams
Heroin	30 grams
Crack	98.5 grams
Methamphetamine	441.2 grams
Counterfeit Pills	308 unit doses
Rx Pills	13 unit doses
Ecstasy	3 unit doses

Outreach 2024

QRT Contacts	5,715
Naloxone Distributions	2,769
People Connected to Treatment	83
Outreach Referrals	259
Pill Takeback Total Weight	45 lbs.
Fentanyl Test Strips Distributed	2,458



The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction installed Harm Reduction Vending Machines across all correctional facilities to provide Naloxone to individuals upon release.

The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction

RecoveryOhio, the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, and the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction collaborate to deliver evidence-based substance use treatment to incarcerated individuals. These programs aim to foster personal accountability, encourage law-abiding behavior, and support sustained recovery.

In September 2024, the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, in partnership with the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, introduced a pilot program offering long-acting injectable buprenorphine to eligible individuals upon release. Participants currently receiving oral buprenorphine through the Opioid Treatment Program may transition to the long-acting injectable within six months of release and continue treatment through monthly injections. By the end of 2024, 23 individuals had enrolled in the program, with 10 successfully transitioning into community-based care and continuing their treatment.

Additionally, in October 2024, the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction launched the Harm Reduction Vending Machine initiative across all correctional facilities. This program provides Naloxone Release Kits to all individuals upon release, regardless of an opioid use disorder diagnosis. Each kit includes two doses of naloxone and ten fentanyl test strips, equipping individuals with potentially life-saving tools.

Since its inception, nearly 1,000 Naloxone Release Kits have been distributed to individuals leaving Ohio's correctional facilities, contributing to the state's broader harm reduction efforts.

DATA & Technology

Data and technology serve as essential pillars in advancing Ohio's efforts to address substance use disorders and support recovery. By leveraging innovative tools like telehealth services, Ohio continues to enhance its ability to deliver effective and personalized care to those on their recovery journey.

Innovation and compassion intersect in this critical area, where data-driven insights inform individualized recovery plans, and technology acts as a bridge to connect individuals with vital resources. These advancements underscore Ohio's dedication to fostering a more informed landscape for all on their journey to sustained well-being.





Ohio Automated Rx Reporting System / Nonfatal Overdose Reporting

In December 2024, Governor DeWine announced that Ohio’s prescription drug monitoring program, known as the Ohio Automated Rx Reporting System (OARRS), will begin alerting healthcare providers about patients who have experienced a non-fatal drug overdose.

These alerts are intended to improve care coordination and promote access to medication for opioid use disorder and other tools to prevent fatal overdoses.

With this new alert, healthcare providers and pharmacists using OARRS will be notified if a patient discharged from an emergency department has recently experienced a non-fatal overdose.

Among Ohioans who died in 2022 from an unintentional drug overdose, at least 32% experienced a prior non-fatal overdose. Among the same population, 26% received a prescription for a controlled substance from a healthcare provider within 60 days of their death. These interactions with the healthcare system reinforce the need to ensure high-risk patients have access to interventions such as overdose reversal medications (e.g., naloxone) and medication for opioid use disorder.

This initiative reflects collaborative efforts across state agencies. RecoveryOhio and the Ohio Department of Health provided advisory support to the State of Ohio Board of Pharmacy during the development of this system, ensuring its alignment with Ohio’s broader strategy to address the overdose crisis.



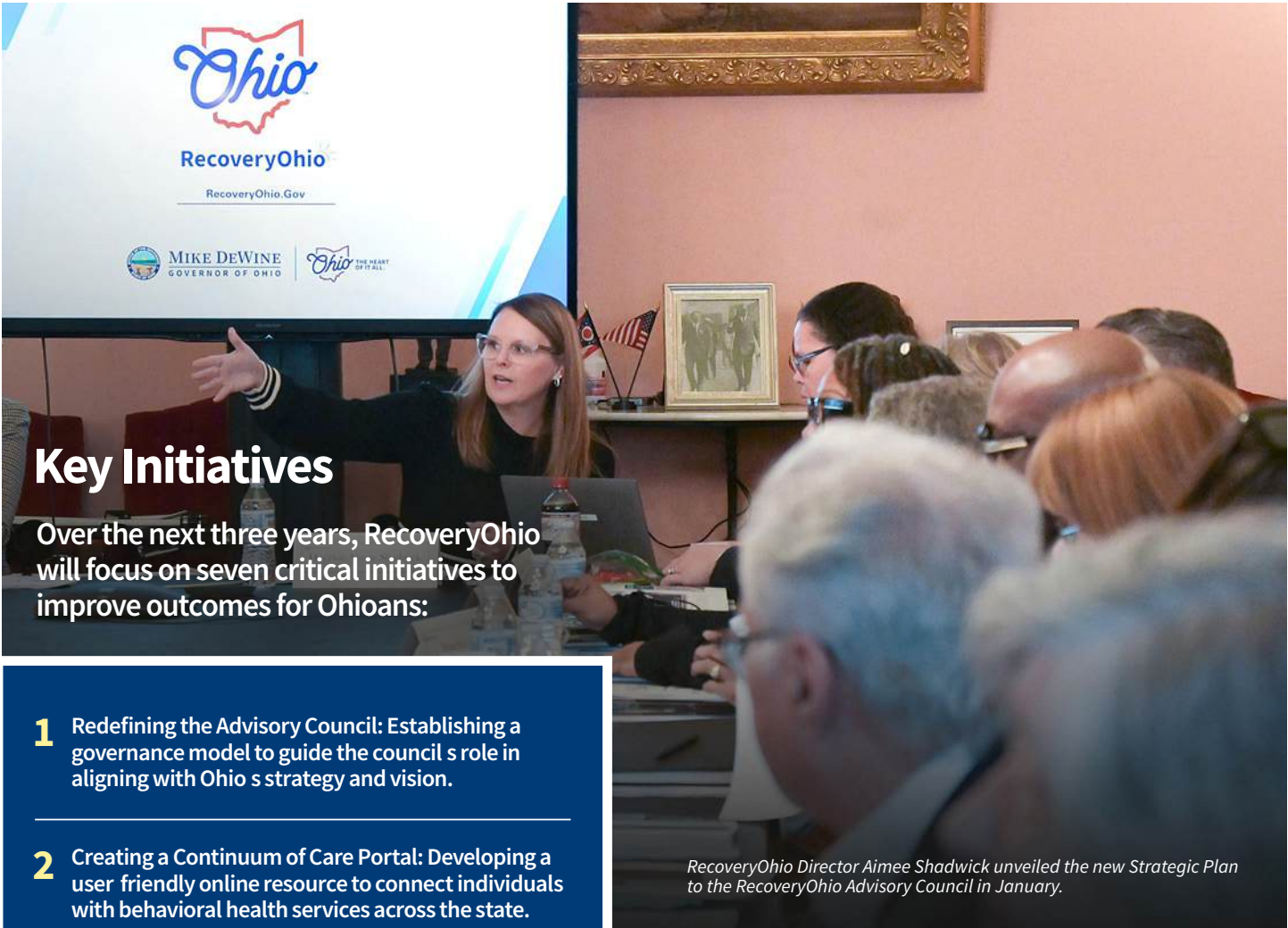
STRATEGIC Plan

In 2023, RecoveryOhio created a comprehensive three-year strategic plan addressing Ohio’s addiction and mental health challenges.

This plan supports Governor Mike DeWine’s Executive Orders 2019-1D and 2019-8D, reinforcing the recommendations of the RecoveryOhio Advisory Council.

Launched in January 2024, the plan outlines initiatives to improve access to care, enhance data systems, and modernize services.

By focusing on these strategic initiatives, RecoveryOhio is paving the way for a healthier, more resilient Ohio, ensuring that individuals and families have access to the support they need for sustained recovery.



Key Initiatives

Over the next three years, RecoveryOhio will focus on seven critical initiatives to improve outcomes for Ohioans:

- 1 Redefining the Advisory Council: Establishing a governance model to guide the council's role in aligning with Ohio's strategy and vision.
- 2 Creating a Continuum of Care Portal: Developing a user-friendly online resource to connect individuals with behavioral health services across the state.
- 3 Building a Predictive Analytics Dashboard: Using advanced data tools to identify overdose risks and target interventions proactively.
- 4 Developing a Statewide Data Reporting System: Establishing performance measures to track progress in mental health and addiction services.
- 5 Standardizing Data Collection: Ensuring consistency in reporting mental health and addiction service availability.
- 6 Providing Prevention Toolkits: Delivering resources for educators, families, and communities to promote effective prevention strategies.
- 7 Delivering Prevention Programs: Expanding evidence-based initiatives for youth and families to foster long-term resilience.

1 Establish an Advisory Council governance model

The RecoveryOhio Advisory Council was initially formed through Governor DeWine's Executive Orders 2019-1D and 2019-8D to provide guidance and recommendations on mental health and addiction policy. However, the council's role lacked clear definition and structure for long-term governance.

The new governance model establishes a more formalized structure, with defined roles, responsibilities, and operating procedures to ensure the council operates efficiently and effectively. This includes regular evaluations, stakeholder engagement, and integration with RecoveryOhio's strategic goals. The model will align the council's work with the state's broader vision for improving mental health and addiction services.

RecoveryOhio Director Aimee Shadwick unveiled the new Strategic Plan to the RecoveryOhio Advisory Council in January.

2 Create and promote a Continuum of Care information portal

Navigating Ohio's mental health and addiction services can be overwhelming for individuals and families. The new Continuum of Care Information Portal will serve as a centralized online hub, designed to help Ohioans easily find resources suited to their specific needs.

The portal will include:

- A comprehensive directory of approximately 2,500 licensed and certified behavioral health providers.
- Information on services, locations, hours, and available appointments.
- Chatbot functionality for more user-friendly assistance, capable of recognizing crises and offering immediate support.

Developed through partnerships with leading technology providers and informed by extensive stakeholder feedback, the portal aims to remove barriers to care and ensure timely access to services. A pilot program will refine its features before a broader rollout.

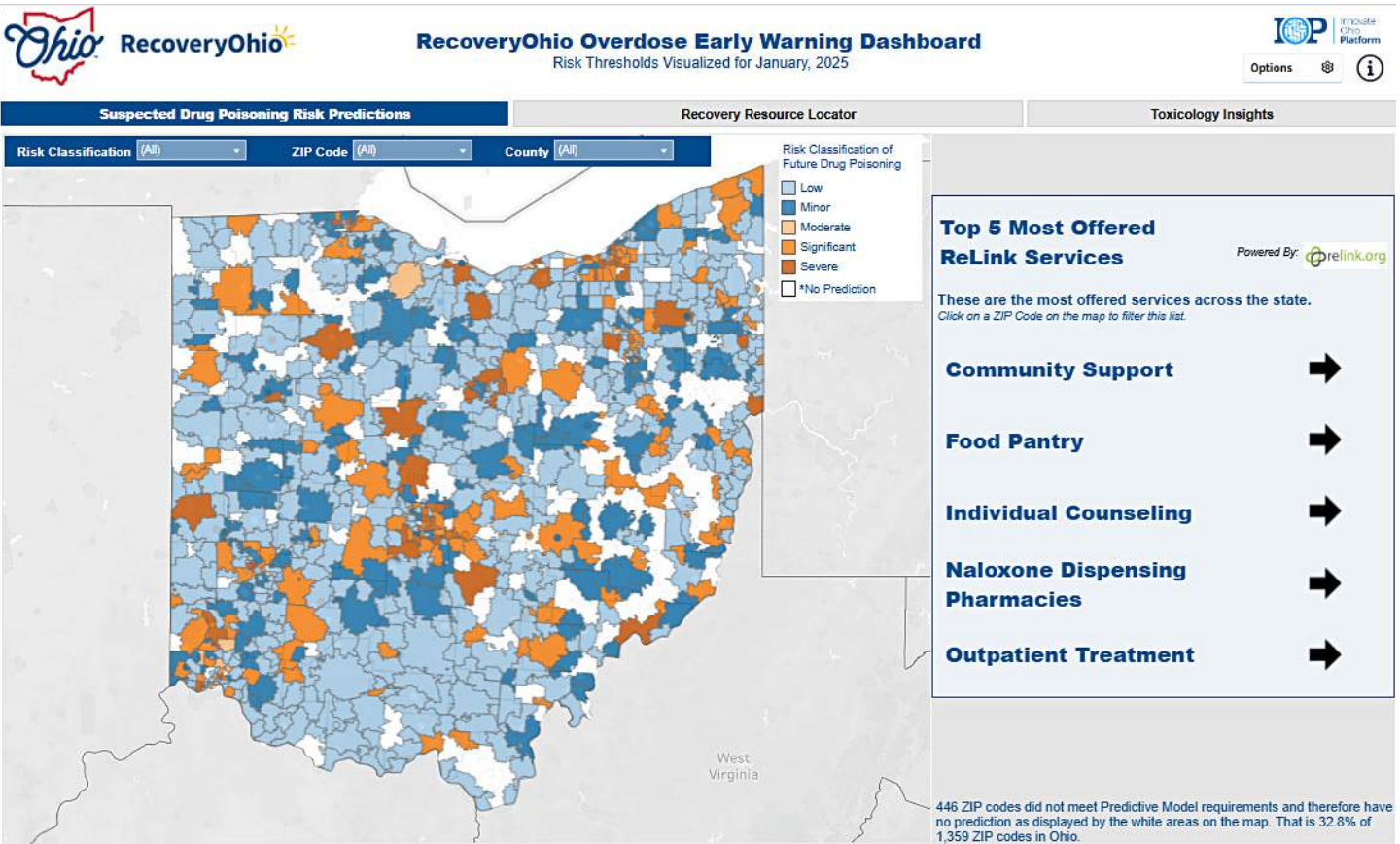


3 Develop a predictive analytics with toxicology data dashboard

Ohio communities often struggle to predict and prepare for emerging drug trends, leading to delayed responses to overdose crises. The predictive analytics dashboard will use cutting-edge technology to forecast overdose risk across Ohio communities up to 30 days in advance.

This tool aggregates diverse data sources, such as naloxone usage, socioeconomic indicators, and emergency reports, to produce a real-time, color-coded map of overdose risk levels. Local leaders can use this information to proactively allocate resources, including naloxone, awareness campaigns, and treatment outreach.

The dashboard will be released in early 2025.



Screenshot of the Overdose Early Warning Dashboard



The RecoveryOhio Advisory Council reviewed the new Strategic Plan in January 2024.

4 Develop a statewide mental health and addiction data reporting dashboard

Effective policymaking relies on accurate and actionable data. Ohio's new statewide dashboard will consolidate mental health and addiction services information, providing key metrics to evaluate progress and inform decisions.

The dashboard will track metrics across six domains, such as access to treatment, engagement, and harm reduction, offering granular insights into service delivery and outcomes. The initiative also involves collaboration with multiple agencies to address data gaps and ensure the dashboard is robust and user-friendly.

5 Establish field data collection standards

Ohio's mental health and addiction services at times suffer from inconsistent data collection and reporting practices, hindering the state's ability to assess service availability and effectiveness. This initiative focuses on creating standardized data collection methods across agencies and providers.

Key steps include compiling an inventory of existing data products, addressing gaps in data entry and definitions, and developing a comprehensive guide for future data collection. Standardized reporting will improve transparency and enable more accurate evaluations of Ohio's behavioral health system.

6 Create and provide statewide access to prevention education and a resource toolkit

To empower communities with the tools to address addiction and mental health challenges, RecoveryOhio is developing a prevention education toolkit. This resource will include proven strategies, educational materials, and best practices tailored to families, educators, and service providers.

In collaboration with Kent State University and Prevention Action Alliance, the toolkit is being informed by extensive research, including surveys and focus groups, to ensure it meets the needs of diverse audiences. The toolkit will also track outcomes to measure its impact over time.

7 Deliver prevention programming for youth and family

Prevention is most effective when it engages youth and their families. RecoveryOhio's initiative will expand prevention programming across Ohio schools, ensuring every student from kindergarten through 12th grade receives age-appropriate mental health and addiction education.

By focusing on family-inclusive strategies, the program will aim to foster environments that support healthy behaviors and long-term resilience. The initiative will also establish benchmarks to evaluate its success and promote continuous improvement.



“We have an obligation to help people who have a mental health problem. It’s in our interest, it’s in their interest, and we need to continue to push forward and move forward. So, I am not going to back up on this. This is just vitally important.”

--- Ohio Governor Mike DeWine





RecoveryOhio 

2024 Annual Review

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MIKE DEWINE
GOVERNOR OF OHIO

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