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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SUICIDE PREVENTION SYMPOSIUM SET FOR MAY 28

Statewide event will share lessons learned and raise awareness about effective approaches to suicide prevention, mental health support

Stark County, OH (March 27, 2025) – Stark County Mental Health & Addiction Recovery (StarkMHAR) will host its first annual Suicide Prevention Symposium, titled “The Suicide Prevention Symposium on Empowering Communities to Save Lives,” on May 28 from 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. at Kent State Stark’s Conference Center - 6000 Frank Ave. NW in North Canton, OH. Registration is \$80 and open to anyone interested in the topic, as everyone has a role to play in helping prevent suicide. [To register, visit StarkMHAR.org’s “Trainings” page.](#) The registration deadline is May 9.

“Stark County has learned some painful, but meaningful, lessons about the impact of suicide, and our goal with this symposium is to gather people to hear some of the best information out there on reducing risk,” said John Aller, PCC, LICDC, executive director of StarkMHAR. “One thing we know for sure is that the more connected communities are, the better, and we are happy to host these conversations,” he continued.

The symposium will be an impactful event designed to equip attendees with critical insights and strategies to prevent suicide and support mental health in attendees’ respective communities. Drawing from lessons learned from a recent suicide cluster in Stark County, the day will provide actionable items communities can do to prevent suicide; discuss transforming the narrative and culture around men's mental health; and reimagining safer suicide care. A unique "Doctors Are In" session will provide participants the opportunity to engage directly with experts and ask questions, making this an invaluable resource for anyone dedicated to suicide prevention and mental health advocacy.

Presenters range from internationally recognized experts to local leaders working in Stark County daily to help prevent suicide, and include:

- David A. Jobes, Ph.D., ABPP, a Professor of Psychology and Associate Director of Clinical Training and Director of the Suicide Prevention Lab at The Catholic University of America. Dr. Jobes will discuss suicide prevention in terms of where a community is now vs. where they want to be; screenings; and will participate in the “Doctors Are In” session;
- Dr. Sally Spencer-Thomas, an internationally-recognized leader and in-demand speaker on topics of resilience, mental health and suicide prevention. Dr. Spencer-Thomas will focus on men’s mental health and will participate in the “Doctors Are In” session;

- Tony Coder, Executive Director of the Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation, will provide a statewide update;
- Michele Boone, LPCC-S, CDCA, SWA, Director of Clinical Services at StarkMHAR and Elena M. Aslanides-Kandis, M.Ed., LPCC-S, Suicide and Resiliency Services Coordinator at StarkMHAR will present on understanding the ripple effect of suicide and share key insights from a youth suicide cluster that occurred in Stark County.

Doors will open at 7:30 a.m. and the registration fee includes breakfast, lunch, and light snacks. Breaks will be offered throughout the day.

In addition to hosting events like this, StarkMHAR and the Stark County Suicide Prevention Coalition work year-round on prevention, intervention, and treatment strategies that mitigate risk of suicide for Stark County residents. Learn more at: <https://starkmhar.org/topics/suicide-prevention/>

About Stark County Mental Health & Addiction Recovery

Stark County Mental Health & Addiction Recovery (StarkMHAR) is the county “Board.” The role of county boards is to plan, evaluate, and fund mental health and addiction services locally by contracting with a wide range of providers for prevention, treatment and recovery support for their community members. Additionally, StarkMHAR regularly looks for areas that need special attention, and makes plans to address those. Learn more about what’s happening now at www.StarkMHAR.org.

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