



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### ***Thrive Peer Recovery Services Launches “Thrive Together” to Combat Loneliness, Isolation, and Transitions Among Older Adults***

Cleveland, Ohio –Loneliness is now recognized as one of the greatest public health threats facing older adults. **Former Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy** said, “Loneliness is an epidemic, and we all have a role to play in combating it.” In response, Thrive Peer Recovery Services is proud to launch **Thrive Together**, a first-of-its-kind program that directly targets social isolation and its devastating mental health effects. Funded through a \$514,036 **SOAR Innovation Grant** from the **Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS)**, Thrive Together—officially named *Golden Connections*— a peer-led, technology-powered program that offers a bold new model of behavioral health support for aging populations.

“We are witnessing a loneliness epidemic among older adults, driven by isolation, stigma, and lack of access to care,” said **Brian Bailys**, CEO of Thrive Peer Recovery Services. “Thrive Together ensures that no one has to navigate these challenges alone— support is just a call or click away.”

Thrive Together blends evidence-based technology with compassionate human connection to address the loneliness crisis experienced by 1 in 3 older Ohioans. “Thrive Together is more than a service—it’s a scalable solution,” said **Mackenzie Phillips**, VP of Strategy at Thrive. “By empowering older adults to connect with someone who understands their journey, we’re building a sustainable model that reduces emergency room visits, improves health outcomes, and restores hope.”

“As Ohio’s aging population continues to increase, it’s important that we have services and supports to meet their unique needs,” said **OhioMHAS Director LeeAnne Cornyn**. “We are proud to partner with Thrive to bring this innovative solution to more older Ohioans.”

#### **How Thrive Together Works:**

- **Human Connection Meets Innovation:** Combines user-friendly digital tools with telephone-based support—accessible even for those with minimal tech experience.
- **Lived Experience:** Participants are matched with individuals trained as Certified Older Adult Peer Support Specialists who share lived experience in navigating life transitions and isolation.
- **Real-Time, Personalized Support:** Includes one-on-one sessions, wellness check-ins, and curated resources for social connection.



- **Whole-Person Care:** Addresses grief, loneliness, sadness, and social isolation in a holistic and stigma-free environment.

### **A Scalable Response to a Growing Public Health Crisis**

One in three older adults reports feeling lonely—a proven risk factor for early death, cognitive decline, and chronic disease. Suicide rates in this population remain disproportionately high, while access to behavioral health care is limited by stigma, mobility issues, and workforce shortages.

### **Future Vision: Expanding Statewide and Nationally**

Thrive Together will first launch in select Ohio communities, with planned expansion through partnerships with Managed Care Organizations (MCOs), community health providers, and state agencies. This aligns with Ohio's broader push for behavioral health innovation and reaffirms Thrive Peer Recovery Services' role as a pioneer in peer-driven recovery models.

"Older adults deserve accessible, inclusive, and effective support," said **Bailys**. "With Thrive Together, we're making that vision a reality."

### **About the SOAR Innovation Grants**

Created in the FY24 - 25 state operating budget with the support of **Governor DeWine** and the **Ohio General Assembly**, the **SOAR Network** is a strategic collaborative working to improve behavioral health outcomes in Ohio. As part of this network, **OhioMHAS is awarding \$10 million in Innovation Grants** to programs like Thrive Together that stand to benefit the mental health of Ohioans.

### **About Thrive Peer Recovery Services**

*[Thrive Peer Recovery Services](#) provides mental health and substance use peer recovery services to self-identifying individuals in Ohio. Through our various programs and initiatives, we support people on their journey and enable them to achieve independence and long-term recovery. We strive to be the gold standard of evidence-based peer support recovery and comprehensive continuing care.*

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