

2025 Ohio Forensic Mental Health Conference



Department of
Behavioral Health



Forging New Paths: Advancing Forensic Mental Health Services through Innovation and System Collaboration

November 7, 2025

The Ohioan Hotel and Event Center
100 Green Meadows Dr S, Lewis Center, OH 43035

This activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the Essential Areas and Policies of the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) through the sponsorship of Northeast Ohio Medical University and DBH. Northeast Ohio Medical University is accredited by the ACCME to provide continuing education for physicians.

Northeast Ohio Medical University designates this live activity for a maximum of 6.00 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

This program has been approved by the Supreme Court of Ohio Commission on Continuing Legal Education for Attorney Professional Conduct: 5.50 hours of CLE credit.



Welcome to the 2025 Ohio Forensic Mental Health Conference!

The Ohio Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) welcomes you to the 2025 Ohio Forensic Mental Health Conference, a dynamic, one-day event designed to inspire innovation and strengthen partnerships across the forensic mental health system. Held on November 7, 2025, this statewide gathering will unite professionals from the fields of mental health, criminal justice, and social services under a shared mission: to drive progress and improve outcomes for individuals involved at the intersection of behavioral health and the justice system.

Under the theme "Forging New Paths," this year's conference will feature expert-led sessions, real-world case studies, and cross-discipline discussions focused on reimagining how forensic mental health services are delivered. Attendees will explore new approaches to diversion, treatment, crisis response, community reintegration, and system-level collaboration.

Whether you're a clinician, administrator, law enforcement officer, legal professional, policymaker, or advocate, this event offers valuable insights and practical strategies that can be applied across settings. It's also a unique opportunity to connect with peers from across the state, build relationships, and share promising practices that support recovery, reduce recidivism, and enhance public safety.

As demand grows for more integrated and effective forensic mental health services, this conference aims to be a catalyst for change—bridging gaps, challenging norms, and highlighting innovative solutions that benefit individuals and communities alike.

Thank you for joining us, thank you for your commitment to excellence, and thank you for being the change Ohio needs and deserve. Let's get started!

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Schedule of Events

Time	Session	Location
7:30 – 8:30 a.m.	On-site Check-In	Grand Ballroom
7:30 – 8:30 a.m.	Poster Session	Grand Ballroom Foyer
8:30 – 10:30 a.m.	Plenary/Welcome/Keynote	Grand Ballroom
10:30 – 10:45 a.m.	Break/Networking	Transition to Next Session
10:45 – 11:45 a.m.	Legal Update	Grand Ballroom
11:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Howard H. Sokolov Forensic Leadership Award	Grand Ballroom
12:00 – 1:15 p.m.	Lunch	Grand Ballroom
1:15 – 2:45 p.m.	Learning Session 1	See Descriptions
2:45 – 3:00 p.m.	Break/Networking	Transition to Next Session
3:00 – 4:30 p.m.	Learning Session 2	See Descriptions

Please note:

- 1. Parking is free at this location.**
- 2. An application has been submitted for continuing education credits for: Psychology, Social Work, RN, Chemical Dependency, Psychiatry, and CLEs for attorneys/judges.**
- 3. Certificates will be emailed within 30 days.**

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<p>8:30-9:00 a.m. Grand Ballroom</p>	<p>Welcome/Plenary: Forging New Paths <i>Dr. John Kennedy, MD, Medical Director, DBH; Dr. Lisa Gordish, PsyD, Forensic Services Director, DBH</i></p>
<p>9:00-10:30 a.m. Grand Ballroom</p>	<p>Keynote Session: Rethinking Competency, Advancing Justice Through Alternatives to Restoration This keynote examines the evolution and reform of competency restoration, highlighting evidence-based strategies and innovations for more humane and equitable outcomes. <i>Honorable Stephen Leifman, Associate Administrative Judge Miami-Dade County Court-Criminal Division (Retired)</i></p>
<p>10:30-10:45 a.m.</p>	<p>Break/Networking & Transition to Next Session</p>
<p>10:45-11:45 a.m. Grand Ballroom</p>	<p>Legal Update: Mental Health Case Law and Legislation and the Implications for Courts, Clinicians and Forensic Monitors Join us to explore recent legislative and case law developments shaping Ohio's forensic mental health system and their practical impact on competency restoration, NGRI cases, and court processes. <i>Dr. Stephen Noffsinger, MD, University Hospitals Cleveland Medical Center; Dr. Ashley VanDercar, MD, JD, University Hospitals Cleveland Medical Center/DBH & Moderator, Dr. Joy Stankowski, MD</i></p>
<p>11:45 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Grand Ballroom</p>	<p>Presentation of the Howard H. Sokolov Forensic Leadership Award</p>
<p>12:00-1:15 p.m. Grand Ballroom</p>	<p>Lunch & Networking</p>
<p>1:15-2:45 p.m. Learning Session 1</p>	
<p>Session 1.01 Room: Hickory 1</p>	<p>Competency 101 Overview of the legal and clinical foundations of competency to stand trial, including evaluation procedures, restoration pathways, and identifying candidates for outpatient restoration. <i>Dr. Shannon Porter, PsyD, Netcare Forensic Center; Dr. Kara Marciani, Eastway Behavioral Health Forensic Center & Moderator, Phil Florian</i></p>
<p>Session 1.02 Room: Hickory 2</p>	<p>Is Your Waitlist Long? Benefits of Jail Based Competency Restoration (JBCR) Services Explore Ohio's jail-based response to the competency restoration crisis, highlighting program structure, collaboration, and early outcomes. <i>Dr. Mary Maddox, PsyD, Southern Ohio Forensic Evaluation Services; Patrice Wiley LISW, Northwest Ohio Behavioral Healthcare; Sabine Dodson LISW, Central Ohio Behavioral Healthcare; Cayl Boman, Southern Ohio Forensic Evaluation Services; Captain Scott Kerr, Hamilton County Sheriff's Office & Moderator, Lottie Gray</i></p>
<p>Session 1.03 Room: Cypress 2 <i>Ethics credits</i></p>	<p>A Collaborative Approach to Risk Management: Ethical Considerations This session covers risk assessment principles, key tools, and strategies for communication, collaborative management, and effectiveness evaluation. <i>Dr. Jason Weisman, PsyD, Inpsyte LLC; Dr. Jaime Adkins, PsyD, JCA Forensics LLC & Moderator, Dr. Melissa Dunphy</i></p>

November 7, 2025

Time/Location

Session 1.04

Room: Grand Ballroom

From Intercepts to Impact: Sequential Intercept Mapping and a Dialogue on Diversion

Panel discussion on Ohio's efforts to improve the mental health–criminal justice intersection through SIM mapping, CIT, competency restoration, and diversion models, with practical steps and case examples.

Honorable Stephen Leifman, Judge (Retired), The Leifman Group; Dr. Em Ribnik, Ph.D., LPCC-S, Criminal Justice Coordinating Center of Excellence/Northeast Ohio Medical University; Ruth Simera M.Ed., LSW, Criminal Justice Coordinating Center of Excellence/Northeast Ohio Medical University; Christopher Nicastro LPCC-S, DBH; Daniel Huesman MSW, LISW, Toledo Legal Aid Society & Moderator, Dr. Lisa Gordish

2:45-3:00 p.m.

Break/Networking & Transition to Next Session

3:00-4:30 p.m.

Learning Session 2

Session 2.01

Room: Hickory 1

Sanity 101

Ohio's legal and clinical framework for NGRI individuals, covering commitment, hospital processes, and court- and community-supported conditional release.

Dr. Delaney Smith, MD, Central Ohio Behavioral Healthcare; Hope George MA, LPCC-S, Harbor; Mary Beth Holler LISW-S, Appalachian Behavioral Healthcare & Moderator Tara Schultz

Session 2.02

Room: Hickory 2

Ethics credits

Death, Taxes, and Bias: What Can be Done?: Ethical Considerations

This session explores implicit bias in forensic assessments and evidence-based strategies to improve fairness and accuracy.

Dr. Terry Kukor, Ph.D., ABPP, Precision Psychological Services LLC; Dr. Marjorie Kukor, Ph.D., Central Ohio Behavioral Healthcare & Moderator Dr. Shannon Porter

Session 2.03

Room: Cypress 2

Building Effective Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) Programs: Foundations, Benefits and Implementation Strategies

This workshop covers Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) programs, including their foundations, benefits, and strategies for effective community implementation.

Honorable David Brannon, Judge Montgomery County Probate Court; Honorable Robert N. Rusu, Jr., Judge Mahoning County Probate Court; Nick Schrantz, Butler County Probate Court & Moderator, Kyana Pierson

Session 2.04

Room: Grand Ballroom

From Trauma to Trust: The Role of Peer Support in Court Involved Recovery

This session examines how peer support enhances mental health outcomes and reduces recidivism for justice-involved individuals.

Honorable Allison Breaux, Judge Summit County Court of Common Pleas; Victoria Utt M.Ed., LPCC, C-DBT, Community Support Services; Sonja Lewis, CPRS, Community Support Services; Jill Adams BA, CDCA, CPRS, One-Eighty; Nonya Wenger CPRSS, OneEighty & Moderator, Holly Cundiff

Please use your cell phone camera to scan the QR Code to access the conference agenda and digital files. Link: <https://bit.ly/OH25-Forensic>



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