

RecoveryOhio

Advisory Council

Initial Report | **March 2019**



MIKE DEWINE
GOVERNOR OF OHIO



JON HUSTED
LT. GOVERNOR OF OHIO

www.Governor.Ohio.gov



Dear Fellow Ohioans:



Ohio is in the midst of a public health crisis. Based on reports from the Ohio Department of Health, about 13 Ohioans die each day from unintentional drug overdoses. Approximately five people a day take their own lives. The repercussions of the drug

epidemic and mental illness have touched the lives of all Ohioans, regardless of their race, ethnicity, or socio-economic background, and every community in our state has been affected.

Moments after taking the oath of office, my first action as Governor was to create the RecoveryOhio initiative to ensure that we act aggressively to address this crisis and invest in the health and well-being of Ohio's citizens. Doing so, we must reduce stigma and provide impactful prevention education for Ohio's children beginning at an early age. We must help those struggling with mental illness or substance use disorders by giving them a system that provides quality treatment on demand. And, we must build recovery-friendly communities that support and promote health and wellness to ensure all Ohioans can live long, productive lives.

In January, I created and named the members of my RecoveryOhio Advisory Council. The council is composed of leaders from across the state with diverse personal and professional backgrounds, who are working together to enhance our understanding of this crisis and how it impacts all sectors of society. At the onset, I asked the RecoveryOhio Advisory Council to provide actionable recommendations to improve mental health and substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery support services in Ohio. Those recommendations are included in this report, and they will serve as a framework for the work to come.

I want to express my sincere appreciation to all members of the RecoveryOhio Advisory Council and thank them for their selfless service. They devoted countless volunteer hours to create this report. Together, we will make a difference in the lives of those suffering from mental health and substance use disorders.

Very respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike DeWine". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mike DeWine

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RecoveryOhio Advisory Council Membership

Chairwoman, Director **Alisha Nelson**, RecoveryOhio
 Vice Chairwoman, Director **Amy Acton**, Ohio
 Department of Health
 Vice Chairwoman, Director **Lori Criss**, Ohio
 Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
 Vice Chairwoman, Director **Annette Chambers-
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 Facilitator, **Michael Buerger**, Department of
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Amy Andres, Ohio Hospital Association
Beth Bickford, Association of Ohio Health
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Pastor Greg Delaney, Woodhaven and Reach for
 Tomorrow Ohio
Juliet Dorris-Williams, The PEER Center
Suzanne Dulaney, County Commissioners
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Joan Englund, Mental Health and Addiction
 Advocacy Coalition
Dale Foerster, Starr Manufacturing

Shea Fraser, recovery advocate
Orman Hall, Ohio High Intensity Drug Trafficking
 Area and Ohio University
Dr. Navdeep Kang, Mercy Health — Cincinnati
Teresa Lamp — The Ohio Council of Behavioral
 Health & Family Service Providers
Stephen Massey, CitiLookout Counseling Center
Judge David Matia, Cuyahoga County Common
 Pleas Court
Jessica Nickel, Addiction Policy Forum
Melissa Rodgers, Recovery Advocate
Terry Russell, National Alliance on Mental Illness of
 Ohio
Dr. Shawn Ryan, Ohio Society of Addiction
 Medicine
Marcie Seidel, Prevention Action Alliance
Brenda Stewart, The Addict's Parents United
Retired Justice Evelyn Lundberg Stratton,
 Stepping Up
 Former Governor **Ted Strickland**
Dr. Julie Teater, Ohio State University — Talbot Hall
Sheriff John Tharp, Lucas County Sheriff's Office
Sarah Thompson, Ohio Citizen Advocates for
 Addiction Recovery
Cheri Walter, Ohio Association of County
 Behavioral Health Authorities
Chief Robert Ware, Portsmouth Police Department

Overview of the RecoveryOhio Initiative

Ohio's mental health and addiction crisis is evident throughout Ohio's communities, including in schools, jails, businesses, health care settings, children's services agencies, and elsewhere.



State departments, boards, and commissions work tirelessly with communities to address the needs of residents and to provide solutions. Unfortunately, operation strategies, spending, and program administration of mental health and substance use treatment and prevention efforts have become split across multiple state agencies that lack coordination and a clear point of accountability.

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. While engaging local governments, coalitions, and task forces, RecoveryOhio's goals are 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.

To provide help from all perspectives, RecoveryOhio is composed of an internal state team with representation from several 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, and criminal justice.

The RecoveryOhio Advisory Council

To ensure that the state's work to address the public health crisis improves the health and wellness of all Ohio citizens, the feedback and expertise from the RecoveryOhio Council and those who have presented information to the group have been invaluable.



The RecoveryOhio Advisory Council recognizes that Ohio's substance use and mental health treatment, prevention, and recovery support services delivery are planned by and provided through professionals from many sectors of society and all levels of government. And as such, solutions must be coordinated.

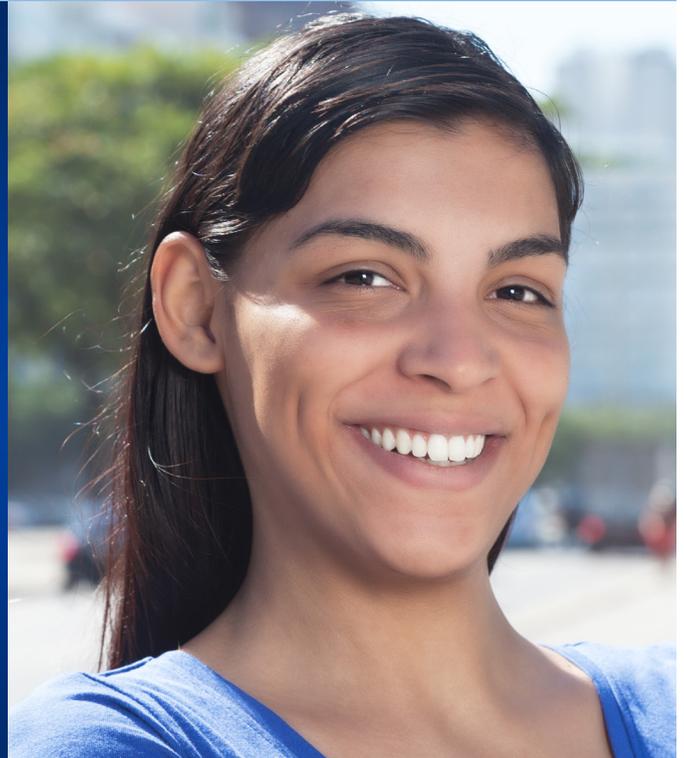


The RecoveryOhio Advisory Council is made up of individuals who are:

- Living with and recovering from mental illness and/or substance use disorders;
- Family members or other advocates for people living with, or recovering from, mental illness and/or substance use disorders;
- Working in local, state, and federal government;
- Working in private industry;
- Employed by institutions of learning;
- Working for organizations of faith;
- Employed in criminal justice settings;
- Working for mental health and substance use prevention, treatment, advocacy, or support services;
- Working in health care; and/or
- Concerned about issues of importance to Ohio's mental health or substance use matters.

RecoveryOhio Initial Report Overview

In January 2019, Governor Mike DeWine challenged the RecoveryOhio Advisory Council to develop recommendations that provide a summary of the current state of Ohio's public health crisis and offers advice on the next steps needed to address it.



Detailed in Executive Order 2019-08D, creating the Governor's RecoveryOhio Advisory Council, the group's recommendations should address:

- How the state could best provide high-quality prevention and early intervention programming in communities and schools;
- How to improve access to treatment services in Ohio for mental health and substance use disorders;
- Recovery support strategies as foundations for wellness, including -- but not limited to -- peer support, employment, and housing;
- Improving the quality of care provided for mental health and substance use disorders in the community and in health care and criminal justice settings;
- How to create efficiencies across systems among, for example, state psychiatric hospitals; private hospitals; criminal justice settings; treatment facilities; recovery support programs; and in businesses so that patients receive coordinated care and support that reduces duplication in service delivery and encourages quality care and outcomes;
- Providing service in a culturally competent way and addressing underserved populations including, but not limited to, the need for:
 - Acute care mental health services for youths;
 - Care that addresses the distinct needs of families impacted by mental illness and addiction;
 - Care that focuses on the unique needs of older adults;
 - Care that focuses on the unique needs of veterans.
- What critical outcomes can be measured to improve Ohio's system of mental health and addiction services;
- How federal, state, and local resources can be better coordinated or redirected to meet the needs of Ohioans; and
- Considerations for the state budget.

Message from the RecoveryOhio Advisory Council

One of Ohio's great strengths is the ability of the state's citizens to come together to solve problems. Among Ohio's challenges is the ongoing effort to provide the best treatments and support for individuals with mental illness and/or substance use disorders. The paramount goal in providing quality services is that each person has a chance to live a happy, healthy, and productive life. As a state, we have not done everything right, but we should be proud of our ability to adapt our practices and help those in need of care and support. Ohioans, now more than ever, must come together to create collaborative systems to serve every community, every race, every person in ways that use science and evidence-based practices.

Research shows that treatment works for both mental illness and substance use disorders and that recovery and long-term wellness are not only possible, but likely. We must embrace this knowledge and meet people where they are to walk alongside them as they find their individual paths to wellness. In doing so, we will remove barriers to treatment and address issues so that all people may receive services when they need them.

All of this is made possible by a strong and knowledgeable workforce, that includes critical specialists, who are in great demand in every region to prevent, treat, and offer recovery support to individuals and their families, but also includes the "citizen workforce" of all Ohioans who reach out and assist and support the people in their lives who are struggling with mental illness, substance use problems, or other personal difficulties. To address the shortage of specialists, Ohio needs a comprehensive plan to encourage students to consider careers to help those with mental illness and addiction.

To protect Ohio's future, the state must expand prevention services to serve all ages through support and education. For people who struggle each day to maintain wellness, we must be bold and use evidence-based programs that reduce harm and give them a chance to recover. And, when an individual is ready for treatment, Ohio must respond by providing a system that immediately grants high-quality, culturally appropriate care that takes into consideration the complex situation of each person and family and relies on best practices.

The RecoveryOhio Advisory Council, under the direction of Governor Mike DeWine, has spent the past two months creating an initial report to highlight the state's most pressing challenges in building a better system. The members of the council are presenting more than 50 recommendations that are impactful and can be implemented by communities that wish to act now to address the crisis and set up a system of support for the future.

We have much work to do in Ohio. But, by collaborating and sharing resources and knowledge, we can continue to be proud of the work we have done and be hopeful for the work we are about to do.

Respectfully submitted,
The RecoveryOhio Advisory Council

Historical Overview

The history of federal and state policies regarding mental illness and addiction is long and complex, including a mixture of helpful and stigmatizing responses. This historical overview is meant to provide a primer on Ohio's helpful public health efforts as a foundation for the recommendations in this report.

Ohio has been working to address mental illness and addiction for almost two centuries. The first state asylum for the mentally ill was approved by the Ohio General Assembly in 1837. Since that time, much has changed.

In 1963, the passage of the national Community Mental Health Act marked a major shift in resources from large institutions to community-based programs. Ohio followed suit in 1967, when Ohio House Bill 648 created 53 local mental health, mental retardation (now developmental disabilities), and drug abuse boards. In 1972, the Regional Councils on Alcoholism were created across Ohio.

In 1980, Senate Bill 160 established a stand-alone Department of Mental Health and divided local mental retardation (now developmental disabilities) and local mental health and drug abuse boards into separate entities. Later, the Mental Health Act of 1988 was passed to empower community mental health systems to treat individuals where they live and to deinstitutionalize Ohio's 14 adult state psychiatric hospitals.

In 1989, the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Abuse was created, regional councils on alcoholism were disbanded, leaving only local alcohol, drug abuse, and/or mental health boards known today as the Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Boards (ADAMH).

Through the 1990s and early 2000s, Ohioans saw dramatic changes in how individuals with mental illness and/or addiction were treated. New developments in medicine created treatment alternatives, such as the introduction of atypical antipsychotic drugs to support those with mental illness and medication-assisted treatment for substance use disorders.

During the past decade, the role state and local governments play to address the mental health and addiction needs of residents has continued to evolve. At the state level, the departments of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services and Mental Health merged into a single Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. Great strides have been made in efforts to integrate mental health and addiction services into health care in recognition that mental health and physical health are both components of overall health and wellness.

With progress, there have also been many challenges. In facing the public health crisis of today, Ohioans should be proud of the work that has been done to support those who live with mental illness and substance use disorders, but still understand that there is much work to do.



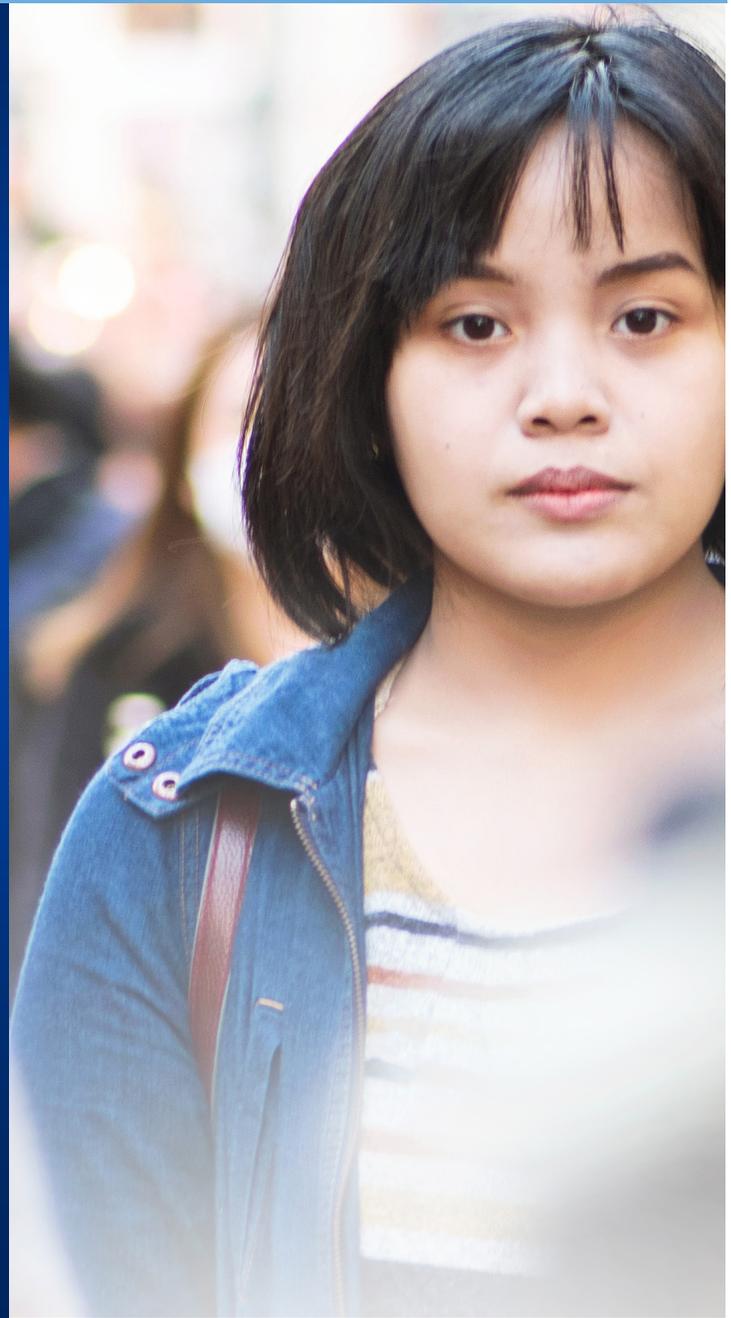
Ohio's Public Health Crisis Today

The continuous change of the mental health and addiction systems of care has made it difficult for Ohio to keep up with the overall needs of individuals who are living with mental illness and/or addiction.

Because of the long history of addressing these issues, health professionals now better understand the causes of mental illness, substance use disorders, and other behavioral health conditions. They have scientifically established prevention programs that decrease the likelihood of addiction and give individuals the tools needed to help manage mental illness. Though today's treatments are more effective and better tolerated and the workforce is better trained than ever, mental illness and substance use disorders remain critical health problems.

The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), an annual study completed by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), assesses the rates of substance use disorders and mental illness in each state. The most recent study covered 2016-2017 and was published in September 2018. The study found that Ohio rates of both substance use problems (including alcohol use disorder and drug use disorder) and mental health disorders were slightly higher than national averages across almost all age groups. Of note is the high prevalence of both substance use problems and mental health disorders in transitional age individuals (ages 18-25) with one in six affected with a substance use disorder and one in four affected with a mental health disorder in Ohio.

Rates of individuals who need and therefore receive treatment were also examined in the



Diagnosis	Age Group	% AFFECTED		Difference (Ohio vs. U.S.)
		Ohio	U.S.	
Substance Use Disorder	<12	7.67	7.35	+4.4%
	12-17	3.99	4.13	-3.4%
	18-25	15.97	14.76	+8.2%
	>25	6.79	6.49	+4.6%
Mental Health Disorder	<18	19.85	18.57	+6.9%
	18-25	25.42	23.53	+8.0%
	>25	18.97	17.89	+6.0%

Source: The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) Sept. 2018

NSDUH survey. Both in Ohio and nationally, only a small number of individuals who need treatment for a substance use disorder actually receive it — 8.2 percent in Ohio and 7.2 percent nationally. The study also shows that the majority of those who do not receive treatment are those who are not yet willing to participate in treatment. The data for mental health disorders is somewhat more optimistic, with 86 percent of Ohioans older than 18 needing treatment receiving it compared with 79 percent, nationally. However, this study does not speak to the quality, comprehensiveness, and outcomes of services, and it is likely that undertreatment is occurring

Childhood experiences have a tremendous impact on lifelong health and opportunity. Research indicates that exposure to traumatic events in childhood negatively impact health over a lifetime, including the development of substance use disorders and mental illness. Traumatic childhood experiences include living with a person with mental illness or substance use disorder, having a family member who was incarcerated, having parents who were separated or divorced, witnessing family violence or being subject to physical, verbal, or sexual abuse. The more of these experiences a child has, the more they demonstrate risky behaviors and have psychological problems and serious health issues over the course of that child’s life.¹

Untreated substance use and mental health disorders can lead to adverse results for individuals, families, and communities — results that can be avoided with timely access to effective treatment. The most extreme of these results are premature deaths. In 2017, Ohio lost 4,854 of its citizens to unintentional drug overdose and another 1,751 to suicide. Additionally, individuals with mental illness and/or substance use disorders often have other medical problems and, on average, die 25 years earlier than those not affected. Expanding effective prevention and treatment can have a substantial impact on the state in terms of fewer lives lost and improved overall health.

Treatment to underserved groups has, in many cases, been made possible by Medicaid and the

expansion of the Medicaid program. Of Medicaid’s 3.3 million non-dual recipients — Medicaid beneficiaries who are not enrolled in Medicare — in fiscal year 2018, more than 840,000 had a behavioral health condition, representing 25 percent of the enrolled population. For adults covered by Medicaid Expansion, that number was more than twice as large — 52 percent of individuals within the group had a behavioral health condition.

Medicaid expansion is essential for ensuring access to those with a mental illness and/or substance use disorder. Approximately one-third of Medicaid expansion enrollees meet screening criteria for depression or anxiety disorders, and nearly half of those individuals reported that obtaining access to mental health treatment was easier after enrolling in Medicaid. Similarly, about one-third of expansion enrollees were diagnosed with a substance use disorder. Of those individuals, more than 75 percent reported improvement in overall access to care, 83 percent reported improved access to prescription medications, and 60 percent reported improved access to mental health care. Medicaid expansion also helps individuals with mental health and substance use conditions obtain access to the physical health care services they need.

For children, Medicaid is a critical component of their access to behavioral health care in Ohio. Medicaid coverage of behavioral health care services is particularly important for children in the custody of child protective services or receiving adoption assistance, all of whom are eligible for the program. Of Medicaid’s 1.6 million youths younger than 21, more than 395,000 had a behavioral health condition, representing 25 percent of the population. Of Medicaid’s 47,000 youths younger than 21 who are in foster care and/or receiving adoption assistance, the number of children with a behavioral health condition was more than twice that of the general population.

1. “Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs),” *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/acestudy/index.html.

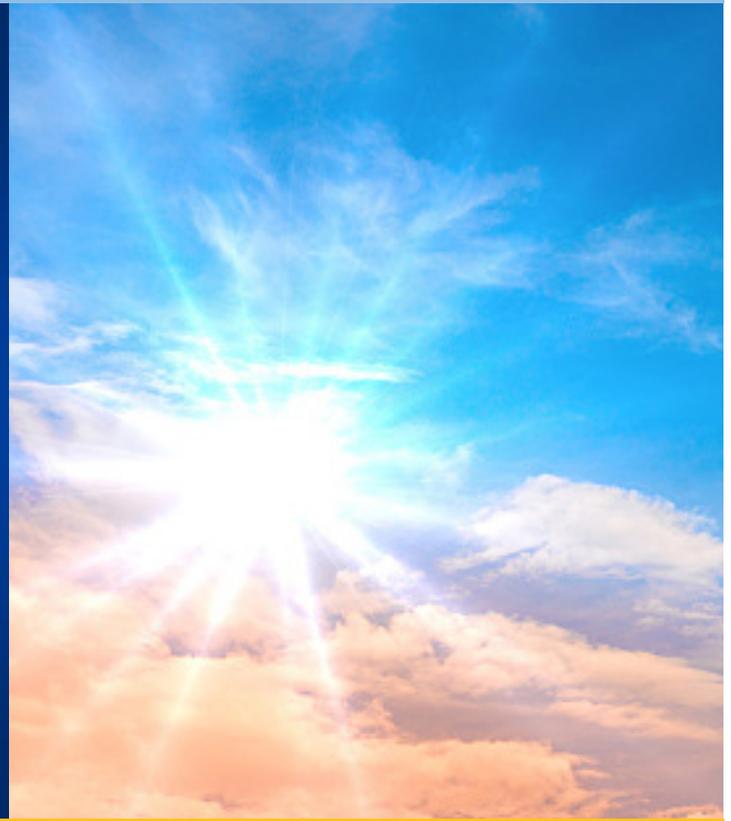
Overview of Insurance Coverage in Ohio

	Employer	Medicaid	Commercial	Uninsured
Adult (19-64)	52.4%	22%	16.3%	9.3%
Children (0-18)	46.2%	42.7%	7.8%	3.0%

Source: Ohio Department of Medicaid, 2019

The RecoveryOhio Advisory Council Recommendations

Experts who serve on the RecoveryOhio Advisory Council understand the complexity of the challenges Ohio is facing today as it addresses mental illness and substance use services.



The recommendations included in this report span a variety of sectors. To structure the recommendations, the Advisory Council categorized its recommendations into eight distinct groupings:



1. Stigma and Education
2. Parity
3. Workforce Development
4. Prevention
5. Harm Reduction
6. Treatment and Recovery Supports
 - a. Early Intervention
 - b. Crisis Support
 - c. Treatment
 - d. Recovery Support
7. Specialty Populations
 - a. Individuals Involved in the Criminal Justice System
 - b. Youth
 - c. Other
8. Data Measurement and System Linkage



1. Stigma and Education

Negative attitudes and beliefs toward people living with a mental health or in recovery from a substance use disorder are common and harmful. These negative attitudes extend to and affect family members, places of work, health care providers, policies, and the allocation of public resources.

Stigmatizing attitudes toward people with mental health conditions are widespread and commonly held. A survey of more than 1,700 adults in the United Kingdom found that the most commonly held belief was that people with mental health conditions are dangerous. The survey also found that respondents thought that some mental health conditions, such as eating disorders and substance abuse, are self-inflicted and that people with mental health conditions are hard to talk to. In the study, people held these negative beliefs regardless of their age, knowledge of mental health problems, and whether they knew someone who had a mental health problem.

More recent studies of attitudes toward individuals with a diagnosis of schizophrenia or major depression convey similar findings. In both cases, a significant proportion of members of the public considered that people with mental health conditions are unpredictable and dangerous, and respondents would be less likely to employ them.²

Some of the harmful effects of stigma can include:

- A reluctance to seek help or treatment. More than half of the adults in the U.S. who need services and treatment get the help they need. Further, the average delay between the onset of symptoms and intervention is 8 to 10 years.³
- A lack of understanding by family, friends, co-workers, and others.
- Fewer opportunities for work, school, or social activities and trouble finding housing.

- Bullying, physical violence, or harassment.
- Health insurance that doesn't adequately cover mental health and addiction treatment services.
- Feelings of hopelessness or a belief that an unhealthy or undesirable situation can't improve.⁴

Many communities across the state are starting conversations and arranging activities to reduce stigma. In addition, the state system has been engaged in reducing stigma.

To address stigma and promote a greater understanding of mental illness and substance use disorders, the RecoveryOhio Advisory Council recommends:

■ 1. A Statewide Public Education Campaign to End Stigma

Commission a statewide campaign to address stigma against people with mental illness and substance use disorders. Stigma and misinformation deeply embed the deadly consequences of Ohio's public health crisis and prevent families from seeking help and professionals from providing the most current and correct information. Ohio's campaign to end stigma should include chronic disease education; evidence-based prevention, treatment, and harm reduction strategies; stories of recovery; and a constant reframing of mental illness and addiction from a moral collapse to chronic illness.

■ 2. Media Outreach

Engage media to encourage the use of appropriate language that destigmatizes mental health and substance use disorders. Collaborate with the media to disseminate the science of treating mental illness and substance use disorders, while demonstrating that people do recover from these chronic brain disorders. Messages, stories, and imagery should be designed to impact a variety of audiences based on age, gender, language, and culture.

2. Committee on the Science of Changing Behavioral Health Social Norms. "Understanding Stigma of Mental and Substance Use Disorders." *Ending Discrimination Against People with Mental and Substance Use Disorders: The Evidence for Stigma Change.*, U.S. National Library of Medicine, 3 Aug. 2016. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK384923/.

3. NAMI. Stigma Free. <https://www.nami.org/stigmafree>

4. Mayo Clinic. Mental health: Overcoming the stigma of mental illness. May 2017. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/mental-illness/in-depth/mental-health/art-20046477>

■ 3. Professional Training Opportunities

Coordinate public and professional training opportunities that expand the understanding and awareness of adverse childhood experiences and psychological trauma, effective treatment models, and the use of medications that aid in the acute care and chronic disease management of both mental illness and addiction.

■ 4. Involving the Citizen Workforce

Involve the citizen workforce by providing community-based trainings, such as Mental Health First Aid, Crisis Intervention Training, naloxone administration, and suicide prevention. These best practice trainings should be allowable as Continuing Education Units for professional development and when offered in an educational setting, provide academic credit.



2. Parity

Ohio passed a limited version of parity legislation in 2006, well in advance of many other states and the federal government. Shortly after, Congress passed the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008, which President George W. Bush subsequently signed into law.

The law is meant to ensure that insurance coverage for mental health and substance use disorder treatment does not differ from coverage for treatment of any other physical disorder in terms of limits on out-patient treatment, in-patient treatment, emergency care, or prescription medication. Some health plans are exempt from the law, but those exemptions are not common after Congress strengthened federal parity laws in 2010. Initially, there was concern that parity would lead to unsustainable costs for health plans. However, most have been able to manage parity implementation, though some have seen slight increases.

Despite the law and the financial neutrality of parity, differences still exist between the rendering of a “medical benefit” and a “behavioral health benefit.” Patients frequently find that access to mental health and addiction providers is much more difficult than access to other medical specialists, that hospital access is difficult due to lack of available beds, and that emergency services are not tailored to meet their needs.

Providers indicate that third-party payers require prior authorization and continued authorizations for therapy, medication, or hospitalization in excess of that required for physical medical conditions. They also describe vague and proprietary criteria that are not always shared with those rendering care and may not be in the best interest of patients. Additionally, despite increasing demand for services, the disparity between compensation for mental health and addiction services and other medical services has led some hospitals and other providers to reduce mental health and addiction treatment capacity in favor of more lucrative “medical” service lines, leading to even more restricted access to care. While the law has helped, true parity does not exist.

To address parity in Ohio, the RecoveryOhio Advisory Council recommends:

■ 5. Alignment With the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act

Align Ohio laws with the federal Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act.

■ 6. State Parity Coordination and Enforcement

Coordinate across Ohio’s state agencies to disseminate a concise definition of parity rights, enhance transparency, and promote a feedback process to allow continuous improvement with clear benchmarks. The Ohio Department of Insurance should work with state departments, such as the Ohio Departments of Medicaid, Mental Health and Addiction Services, Health, Administration Services, and other appropriate departments, boards, and commissions to achieve this goal. State agencies should also look at enforcement opportunities and their role in consumer protection.

■ 7. Parity Education and Training

Educate patients, families, employers, and professionals who serve the public — for example hospital staff, social workers, and public health workers — to ensure understanding of insurance coverage rights and how to seek support with parity enforcement. Require that patients seeking treatment receive a notification of their parity rights similar to notifications regarding the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).



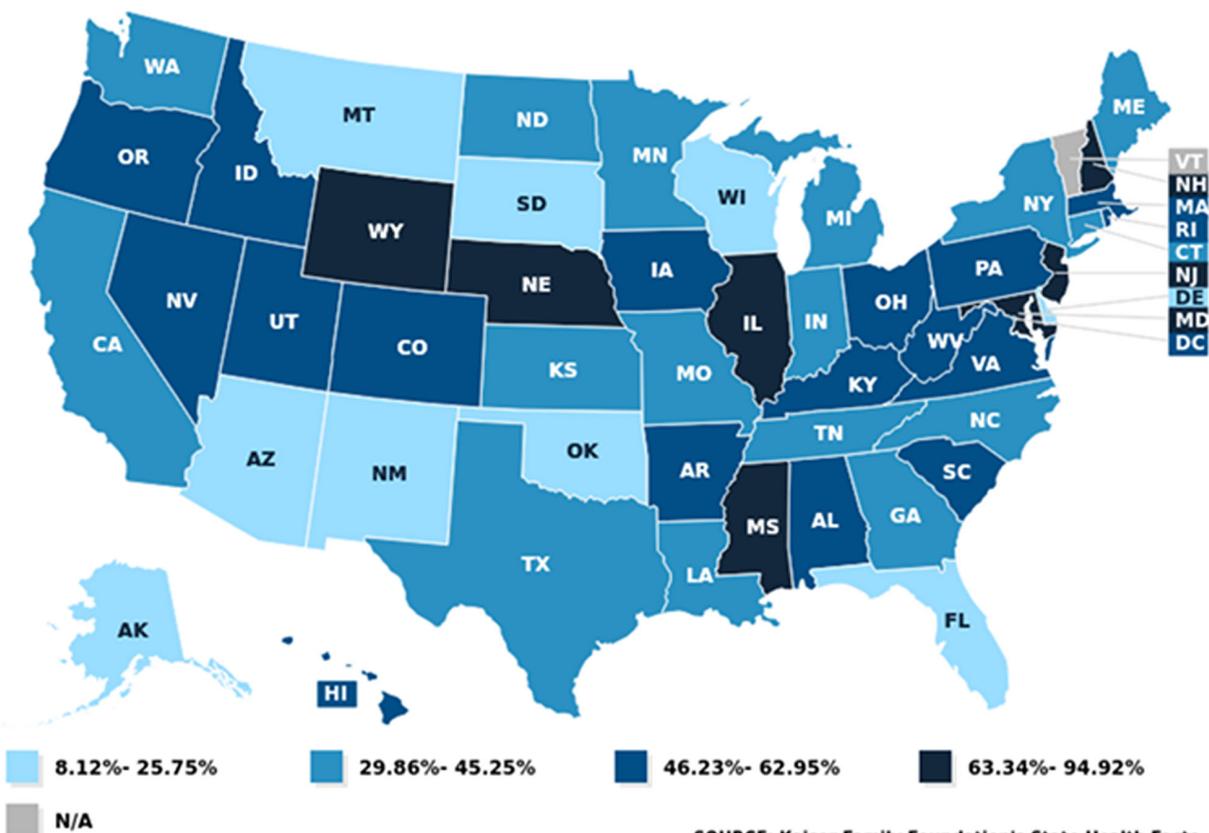
3. Workforce Development

The mental health and addiction (behavioral health) treatment workforce is a complex and growing system made up of many professionals of varying levels of training and education. Between 2006 and 2017, Ohio added 580 behavioral health establishments, representing a more than 30 percent increase. While some behavioral health establishment types have been in decline (such

as stand-alone psychiatric practices), others have experienced growth (such as mental health and substance abuse residential facilities). The increased visibility of behavioral health issues and an improved understanding of mental illness and substance use disorders as chronic diseases have led to a growth in treatment facilities, driving the need for a larger workforce to meet the demand for clinical services.

An adequate supply of a well-trained employees is the foundation for an effective service delivery system. Most of the new growth in the behavioral health workforce has been concentrated in urban areas, which exacerbates the problem of treatment access in Ohio's rural communities. In its most recent evaluation of the state of mental health in America, the nonprofit Mental Health America ranked Ohio 34th for mental health workforce availability with a ratio of 560 individuals to 1 health care provider. The Kaiser Family Foundation cited Ohio as only meeting 53.23 percent of the state's behavioral health need. The following chart shows shortage areas based on the number of health professionals relative to the population. To be considered as having a shortage of mental health providers, the population to provider ratio must be at least 30,000 to 1.

**Mental Health Care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs):
Percent of Need Met, as of December 31, 2018**



Several barriers to a satisfactory behavioral health workforce supply exist, including an aging workforce, a lack of next generation employees interested in pursuing careers in behavioral health-related fields and the difficulty in retaining workers. These challenges are further complicated by a need to ensure that the mix of professionals is appropriate to achieve the best possible behavioral health service outcome. Behavioral health care providers must be culturally competent and able to meet the needs of a wide range of people with drastically different experiences, backgrounds, and resources. Provider agencies, also referred to as establishments, report that turnover among behavioral health providers is high. This is often attributed to work-related stress, secondary trauma and low pay. In addition, primary care providers play a large role in behavioral health and are often expected to treat individuals with behavioral concerns that exceed their training and experience

To address Ohio’s workforce gaps, the RecoveryOhio Advisory Council recommends:

■ **8. A Workforce Needs Assessment**

Commission a study to quantify the behavioral health workforce needs of Ohio and highlight disparities both geographical and cultural.

■ **9. Creation of a Regulatory and Financing Structure That Supports Workforce Equity With Other Parts of Health Care and Between Addiction and Mental Health Specialties**

Review Ohio’s regulations and reimbursement strategies to ensure that Ohio’s approach makes it attractive to employers to hire behavioral health specialists. A thorough review would include parity laws and enforcement, third-party reimbursement policies and rates, areas of conflict with federal laws and regulations, and approaches to credentialing for insurance payment that may usurp the authority of professional credentialing boards to license and determine fitness to provide care.

■ **10. Establishment of a Career Path to the Behavioral Health Field**

Develop a collaborative strategy that includes the Ohio Department of Education, the Ohio Department of Higher Education, and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services to build on known best practices and successful innovative approaches to expand the number of credentialed professionals, to develop career exploration, and to establish pathways to jobs that support the prevention and treatment of mental illness and substance use disorders. For those health care providers and therapists who do not specialize in the treatment of mental illness

or addiction, the curriculum should require exposure to standards of care for the prevention, early identification, and treatment of mental illness and substance use disorders. Institutions of higher education that train behavioral health professionals should emphasize evidence-based practice competency, so graduates enter the field prepared to provide the most modern and effective treatments upon entering the workforce at graduation.

■ **11. Expanding the Workforce Through Financial Support for the Education and Training of Critical Specialists**

Develop a student loan repayment program for those who complete their studies and agree to spend a specified time working in Ohio to address the state’s shortage of mental health and addiction specialists. Offer financial support for specialized training opportunities to retain and promote contemporary practice among the existing behavioral health workforce.

■ **12. Supporting and Retaining the Existing Workforce**

Support and retain the existing workforce through continuing education and advancing licensure. Target resources focused on trauma and burnout among first responders, child welfare specialists and health care providers working with people with mental illness and addiction.

■ **13. Increasing the Number of Prevention Specialists**

Increase the number of prevention professionals by implementing recruitment activities and making changes in reimbursement for prevention services.

■ **14. Promoting Cultural Competence**

Support the provision of effective prevention, treatment, and recovery services for to all Ohioans while recognizing the unique beliefs, values, customs, languages, abilities, and traditions of the state’s diverse citizenry. Invest in education to support cultural competency

■ **15. Teaching Nonspecialists to Respond and Provide Needed Support**

Invest in trainings to enhance the skills of collaborating professionals, such as health care workers and first responders, so they can respond to people with mental illness and addiction. The instruction would include Crisis Intervention Team and school resource officer training

■ **16. Supporting and Expanding the Role of Peer Support Specialists**

Support and expand the role of peer support specialists, elevate and formalize the credentialing process, improve upon the current structure of peer support services with the Ohio Department of Medicaid and the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, and ensure ongoing opportunities for continuing professional development and support mechanisms.

■ **17. Using Technology to Expand Access to Care in Underserved Areas**

Advance telehealth approaches by providing clinician training and infrastructure to expand treatment opportunities to underserved areas of the state.

■ **18. Attracting More Child Mental Health Specialists**

Provide more mental health services for children through expanded support of child psychiatry programs and new incentives for other professionals and para-professionals who specialize in meeting the needs of children and young adults in Ohio.



4. Prevention

Effective strategies to reduce the prevalence of mental illness and addiction conditions and decrease adverse outcomes require a full continuum of care, including health promotion, evidence-based prevention and treatment, and recovery resources to support healthy living. Prevention is an often overlooked, but important, component of this continuum. The adage “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” is an appropriate expression, as effective prevention services help individuals become more resilient, cope with life stresses, and decrease the likelihood of developing substance use disorders, mental illness, or both.

Prevention in Ohio is grounded in the public health model, which focuses on improving the well-being of populations. Public health draws on a science base that is multi-disciplinary and engages the entire community through the social-ecological model. Prevention aims to reduce underlying risk factors that increase the likelihood of mental health and substance use disorders while simultaneously promoting protective factors to decrease the likelihood of mental health and substance use disorders.

Education and environmental intervention strategies are two primary approaches to preventing substance use disorders. Some prevention interventions are designed to help individuals develop the skills to act in a healthy manner. Others focus on creating environments that support healthy behavior. Research indicates that the most effective prevention interventions incorporate both approaches. Prevention strategies should promote healthy relationships at home, school, and in the community to build resiliencies and reduce risk factors that contribute to development of mental health and addiction conditions across the lifespan.

To enhance prevention programming in Ohio, the RecoveryOhio Advisory Council recommends:

■ **19. School and Community Surveys**

Expand the use of standardized youth prevention survey instruments (Youth Risk Behavior Survey and OHYES!) for improved statewide data that can be beneficial for the development of programming to allow local communities to compare their results to the state average and allow state policymakers to compare Ohio to other states.

■ **20. Statewide Prevention Coordination**

Establish statewide prevention coordination with all state departments and agencies to ensure best practices, consistent messaging, technical assistance, and delivery of prevention services across multiple domains.

■ **21. Coordinating Funding to Improve Sustainability, Efficiency, and Effectiveness of Investments**

Identify collaborative funding strategies that will sustain high-quality and effective prevention services across domains in local communities for all age groups and populations. This includes efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect and development of resiliency skills to help those who have been exposed to psychological trauma. Prevention services should receive on-going, sustainable funding from predictable fund sources to eliminate the grant cycle effects on prevention programs and services.

■ **22. Community Coalitions**

Encourage the expansion of community coalitions that include public and private partnerships with health care providers to identify local needs and coordinate best practice assessments and implement strategies targeting multiple domains across the lifespan with the collection of specific outcome measures.

■ **23. K-12 Prevention Education**

Designate personnel within the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to collaborate in the implementation of a comprehensive model that includes prevention education and social emotional learning. This model should establish health education standards for every student in Kindergarten through 12th grade and include policies that support positive and supportive environments; collect assessment data; train staff; establish referral processes; provide access

to mental health and addiction interventions; screen for adverse childhood experiences and other behavioral health needs; intervene early when problems are identified; involve parents and school resource officers; and work with the community.

■ **24. Before- and After-school Programs**

Review potential funding mechanisms for before- and after-school programming as a component of a local continuum of prevention strategies developed with community partners.

■ **25. Prevention Across the Lifespan**

Disseminate models of prevention education across the lifespan to local communities that include, but are not limited to, senior citizens, families, and college students.

■ **26. Drug-Free Workplace Programs**

Prioritize the expansion of drug-free workplace programs through incentives and expanded technical assistance strategies.

■ **27. Suicide Prevention**

To prevent suicides, expand collaborative strategies to prevent suicide for all ages by requiring all boards of health, Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health (ADAMH) boards, and community coalitions to include the topic in their community assessment, skills training, and planning efforts and to focus attention to high-risk populations, such as senior citizens, youths, first-responders, incarcerated individuals, military members, and veterans.

■ **28. Expanding Law Enforcement's Role**

Recognize and strengthen the prevention role of law enforcement in schools and communities by providing training opportunities, including them in assessment and planning efforts, and implementing best practices that expand their presence as role models, mediators of conflicts, and supporters for parental, school, and community responses to substance use and mental illness.

■ **29. Community Prevention Strategies**

Increase efforts to educate the public about strategies evidenced to prevent overdoses, accidental poisonings, and suicide, such as safe medication disposal programs; safe storage of medications, including marijuana for medical use; and safe gun storage.



5. Harm Reduction

Harm reduction is a public health strategy to reduce the harms associated with certain behaviors. Harm reduction programs have been used to decrease adverse consequences of illicit drug use, alcohol use, mental illness and other illnesses. Although harm reduction strategies are sometimes seen as conflicting with traditional treatment approaches, the strategies are increasingly and appropriately being recognized as important to the continuum of care. Harm reduction strategies provide an opportunity to engage with individuals, offer broad assistance to those who are struggling, help them survive their current circumstances, decrease the likelihood that their behaviors will harm others, and provide opportunities for entry into other parts of the care continuum as they strive to improve their lives.

Harm reduction is helpful for individuals with mental health and addiction conditions and the communities where they reside. For example, suicide prevention is an area where harm reduction approaches can be of value. Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in Ohio. Unfortunately, many of these suicides have a high prevalence of firearms use. Safe storage of firearms could reduce this number. The Ohio Department of Mental Health has been collaborating with the Buckeye Firearms Association on a campaign to educate the public on safe storage and signs of suicide to address this issue.

Harm reduction is an underdeveloped component of Ohio’s care continuum. Enhancing this has the potential to save lives and make communities safer and healthier. To improve harm reduction programming in the state, the RecoveryOhio Advisory Council recommends:

■ **30 Exploring Evidence-based Harm Reduction**

Investigate the outcomes of states with heavily evidenced models of policy-controlled harm reduction strategies, such as New York and Massachusetts, and the impact of these efforts on public health, including reducing the spread of infectious diseases, limiting the use of emergency rooms for primary care, and increasing connections to hard-to-reach populations at risk of overdose.

■ **31. Promoting Harm Reduction**

Strengthen collaboration among the Ohio Department of Health and Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services and local governments, including ADAMH Boards and others in Ohio, to push forward a multiprong campaign with education and implementation support to increase the spread of comprehensive harm reduction initiatives, such as naloxone-availability and vaccination programs.

■ **32. Increasing Naloxone Availability**

Assess every community for the accessibility of naloxone for overdose reversal and remove barriers to promote greater use.



6. Treatment and Recovery Supports

Each year, nearly 2.3 million Ohioans (20 percent of the population) experience a mental health condition. Each year, nearly 2.3 million Ohioans

(20 percent of the population) experience a mental health condition, with 575,000 experiencing severe symptoms. Ten to 15 percent of Ohioans or 1.15 million to 1.75 million individuals have a life history of a substance use disorder (alcoholism or another drug addiction). While these figures are consequential, it is encouraging that treatment for individuals with mental illness, addiction -- or both -- is effective, and that with sustained treatment, most individuals do recover to lead active, productive, and satisfying lives. In fact, recovery rates for individuals with mental health or substance use conditions are as good as those for other physical conditions, such as diabetes, asthma, and high blood pressure.

As with other diseases and disorders, mental illness and substance use disorders impact everyone. Ohio must continue to work hard to ensure that all strategies addressing mental illness and substance use disorders includes effective approaches to address the needs of all Ohioans and that services and supports in institutions and community programs provide equitable access and clinical approaches that effectively meet the needs of Ohio's minority populations.

To organize the RecoveryOhio Advisory Council's recommendations for treatment, this section is grouped into four categories: Early Intervention, Crisis Services, Treatment, and Recovery Supports.

Early Intervention

From birth to adulthood, Ohioans deserve our best efforts to support their wellness. Left unidentified and untreated, a serious mental health condition or substance use disorder can cause significant functional impairments at home, at school, and with peers. Throughout a person's life, there are opportunities to provide intervention to change the trajectory of his or her well-being.

Screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment (SBIRT) was originally developed as a public health model designed to provide universal screening, secondary prevention (detecting risky or hazardous substance use before the onset of abuse or dependence), early intervention, and treatment for people who have problematic or hazardous alcohol disorders within primary and other health care settings.⁵ Based on the SAMHSA model, SBIRT is unique in its universal screening of all patients regardless of an identified disorder, allowing health care professionals to address the spectrum of such mental health and addiction conditions even when the patient is not actively seeking an intervention or treatment for his or her condition. SBIRT is also cost-effective, especially when individuals are identified early.⁶

5. SAMHSA, Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment in Behavioral Healthcare, April 1, 2011, https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/sbirtwhitepaper_0.pdf

6. Mha.ohio.gov. (2019). *Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) in Behavioral Healthcare*. [online] Available at: <https://mha.ohio.gov/Portals/0/assets/Initiatives/SBIRT/20110401-samhsa-sbirt-whitepaper.pdf>

Through early identification and intervention, individuals of all ages can achieve success in school, in work, and in family life. To support this work, the RecoveryOhio Advisory Council recommends:

■ 33. Enhancing Early Intervention Training

Provide statewide screening trainings to health care providers, employers, school health professionals and criminal justice settings to promote mental health and substance use screenings for Ohioans across the lifespan from prenatal to older adults.

■ 34. Increasing the Use of Standardized Screening Tools for Early Identification and Intervention

Require the use of standardized screening processes, such as SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment) and tools such as the PHQ-9 (Patient Health Questionnaire) to ensure the quality and consistency of early intervention strategies. Provide incentives for the use of technology in the delivery of screenings to improve access. Support the development of referral processes to facilitate care for those demonstrating need. Investigate third-party reimbursement payment for screenings in all settings, by all qualified providers and for mental illness and substance use disorders.

■ 35. OhioSTART

In all Ohio counties, establish and expand quality programs that emphasize intervention with the whole family, such as OhioSTART (Sobriety, Treatment, and Reducing Trauma). Such programs can help parents maintain custody of their children while receiving the necessary structure and support for their recovery from addiction and/or mental illness and promotes the overall health of the family.

Crisis Support

Individuals of all ages (children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly) and their families are seeking care for substance use and mental health conditions in record numbers. Frequently, these individuals are exhibiting severe symptoms, such as psychosis, suicidal thoughts, and agitation and aggression and/or are exhibiting symptoms of substance withdrawal or the toxic effects of substance ingestion. In many communities, these individuals arrive in emergency departments, which may lack the full-spectrum of resources to adequately assess, stabilize, and integrate them back into the community.

Additionally, law enforcement is frequently called upon to respond to a mental health or addiction crisis. Sometimes, the commission of a crime necessitates the arrest of the person experiencing the crisis. The person may then be jailed – which creates a difficult situation for both the person and the staff of the jail. The environments of emergency departments and jails are not conducive to the resolution of a psychiatric health emergency and, therefore, an undue burden is placed on those facilities and on those experiencing a crisis related to mental illness or a substance use disorder. Such facilities should be evaluated and better equipped to handle these situations as part of the optimization of the overall continuum.

Crisis services are part of a continuum focused on managing individuals’ mental health, addiction, and medical needs and should be integrated whenever possible. They are cost-effective and result in high client satisfaction rates. These services provide comprehensive evaluation and treatment approaches that are specifically designed to stabilize individuals in crisis and promptly link clients to community treatment, frequently avoiding the need for inpatient treatment. Many such efforts are already in place in parts of Ohio and were expanded as a result allocated funding granted by the General Assembly in the fiscal year 2018-19 budget.

These services include transitional housing, quick response teams, crisis stabilization units, and mobile crisis teams to name only a few. While there are numerous models and settings for provision of crisis services, Ohioans of all ages and their families could greatly benefit from a coordinated mental health and addiction crisis system that is integrated with the broader community behavioral health care and medical care system and is readily accessible throughout the state. Such services should be funded in a sustainable way and have facility-based and community-based options available.

To address the crisis services needs in Ohio, the RecoveryOhio Advisory Council recommends:

- **36. Exploring Crisis Infrastructure Models**
Investigate promising crisis service models from across Ohio and in other states, such as Arizona and Vermont. Build a crisis infrastructure that works to assist all Ohioans at all ages by incorporating crisis services into a continuum focused on managing patients’ medical, psychological, and social needs in an integrated fashion. Ensure flexibility in regulations and financing to allow for facility-based and community-based options determined by the availability of local resources and partnerships. Create a sustainable financing model for the development and ongoing operations of these crisis services, including block-grants to local governments and third-party payments to support ongoing service delivery.

■ **37. Hospital Engagement**

Support hospitals in their efforts to connect individuals experiencing mental illness and substance use disorders and their families to treatment and recovery support. Strategies should be developed for patients receiving care in emergency departments and in outpatient and inpatient settings

■ **38. A Review of Civil Commitment**

Review and expand the civil commitment process and the role of involuntary treatment in helping individuals and families experiencing mental health and addiction crises to access services. Educate professionals on the full definition and processes and provide community education on accessing emergency services, including the use of medication assisted outpatient treatment.

■ **39. Streamlining Information Sharing to Ease Collaboration and Improve Care**

Develop trainings and tools that help collaborative partners share information for care coordination while maintaining compliance with federal privacy and confidentiality laws related to mental illness and substance use disorders.

Treatment

Treatment can take many forms and occur in many different settings, including outpatient treatment centers, clinician offices, hospitals, residential settings, and increasingly, in schools and community settings. There is no single “best” treatment that applies to all individuals affected by a mental health or substance use disorder, although preferred or “evidence-based” treatments do exist and provide the highest likelihood of treatment success. For some individuals, medication is a critical part of recovery. For others, psychotherapy and other “talking” treatments are preferred. For many, the combination of medication and therapy, along with recovery supports, yields the best results. In all cases, it is important that treatment is tailored to the specific characteristics and preferences of the person experiencing the behavioral health condition while following the best-known evidence

Mental illness and substance use disorders are frequently life-long and chronic diseases. It is important for communities to have a coordinated network of community-based services and supports that help individuals throughout their life span. A strong system of care also gives individuals in recovery a voice in the recovery system and helps individuals in need of treatment for mental health

and/or substance use disorders drive their own recovery journey.

As both mental illness and addiction are life-long chronic diseases, it is important for communities to have a recovery-oriented system of care that brings together a coordinated network of community-based services and supports to help individuals throughout their lives. A strong recovery-oriented system of care also gives individuals a voice in their own recovery journey.

A recovery-oriented system of care will ensure that treatment for mental illness and substance use disorders includes several factors to yield the best chances of success. The care should be:

- **Evidence-based:** Not all treatments are created equal. “Evidence-based” treatments are those that have undergone scientific scrutiny and demonstrate effectiveness for specific conditions. While not all individuals will respond to any single evidence-based treatment, these approaches do give the best opportunity for a successful treatment outcome. Medications, therapies, and even recovery supports may be evidence-based. Nationally, there are still many practitioners who do not consistently use evidence-based treatments, leading to some individuals not achieving the treatment outcomes they should.
- **Culturally competent:** Treatments should consider the individual’s culture and preferences that may exist within that culture. Treatment should consider cultural factors that may impact access and barriers to treatment and engagement. These may include language, communication preference, and historical mistrust of the health care system. Cultural factors may also impact response and the sustainment of long-term engagement. Cultural factors should be identified and considered from assessment and throughout the continuum of care.
- **Patient and family-centered:** The person receiving treatment and, in many circumstances, the individual’s family, should be involved in making treatment plans using a “shared decision-making” process. They should be presented with diagnostic information, treatment options, and the risks and benefits of each option and likelihood of treatment success with each option. This serves to build the treatment alliance and enhance treatment adherence, which is essential for a successful outcome.
- **Age appropriate:** Treatments are effective for individuals of all ages and cultures. Physiology, medical issues, life experiences, and life challenges differ among age groups. The treatments required for individuals in each life stage need to consider these factors among others for clinical safety and good treatment results.

- **Trauma-informed:** Many individuals experiencing mental illness or a substance use disorder experience early life trauma. Many others are victimized later in life. In a great number of these individuals the trauma itself is a contributor to the symptoms they experience, so all treatment approaches, including medication and therapy, should consider the trauma context, avoid re-traumatization, and assure that the trauma is addressed.
- **Integrated and collaborative:** Treatment providers should coordinate efforts to ensure that an individual’s needs are comprehensively met. This includes collaboration among prescribers, therapists, and providers of other medical care, as well as with schools, housing providers, and others outside of the traditional health care system to have complete information, avoid gaps and redundancies, and achieve best outcomes.
- **Outcome-driven:** The goal of treatment is to produce positive results, which may include a decrease of symptomology and improved life-skill functioning. Positive outcomes may include retention in treatment, sustaining employment, completion of education, and being a productive community participant. Treatment that does not achieve these goals in the expected time frame should be re-evaluated for effectiveness.
- **Sustainable:** Many mental health and substance use disorders are chronic and require sustained treatment for continuing success. Treatments should be viewed through this lens. Treatments must be affordable and tolerable to the individual, so treatment does not terminate prematurely.

Treatment is effective and can help people recover to lead satisfying and productive lives. Every citizen and family in Ohio should have ready access to all levels of treatment and care. This includes easy access to acute crisis services, subacute step-down rehabilitative care, and permanent supportive housing, when needed.

To address the gaps in treatment, the RecoveryOhio Advisory Council recommends:

- **40. A Focus on Diversity**
Convene a focus group connected to RecoveryOhio to review the impact of Ohio’s mental illness and addiction crisis on citizens of racial, ethnic, geographic and socio-economic differences to ensure that all Ohioans have equal access to the treatment and recovery support services they need to live healthy and fulfilling lives.
- **41. Supporting a Full Continuum of Care**
Review the continuum of mental health and

- addiction treatment services available in communities across Ohio to determine gaps and create strategies to improve access to services and the geographical accessibility of mental health and addiction treatment services. Recognizing addiction and mental illnesses are chronic diseases, the continuum of treatment services should include outpatient, intensive community-based treatment services, residential treatment, and when necessary, inpatient treatment options that allow individuals to access the right services at the right time. Review reimbursement models across all payers (Medicaid, Medicare, commercial insurance) to identify gaps and challenges and develop strategies to support payment for services across the full continuum of care.

■ **42. Promoting Levels of Care Determination and Treatment Recommendations**

Ensure that each patient’s needs and treatment recommendations are determined by a qualified clinical professional. Promote insurance coverage of medically-necessary services identified by qualified clinical care providers. Offer training and practice support to clinicians on the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) levels of care and the most effective methods of treatment continuation between levels of care for people with substance use disorders. Provide similar training for best practices in diagnosis and treatment planning for people with mental illness.

■ **43. Telemedicine**

Develop trainings and tools that help collaborative partners share information for care coordination while maintaining compliance with federal privacy and confidentiality laws related to mental illness and substance use disorders.

■ **44. Using Medication to Treat Addiction**

Provide training and ongoing technical assistance to increase the number of medical professionals who can provide comprehensive medication assisted treatment (MAT) services for all MAT options and promote acceptable clinical standards of care that include linking patients to mental health and substance use treatment providers so that MAT is provided in conjunction with psychosocial treatment and supports.

■ **45. Improved Access to Medication to Treat Mental Illness and Addiction**

Ensure people with mental illness and addiction have rapid and continued access to prescribers and medications in community and institutional settings.

■ **46. Alternative Pain Therapies**

Educate patients and prescribers about effective nonopioid pain management strategies including both nonopioid pain medications and nonpharmacological treatments for pain.

Recovery Support

The adoption of recovery by mental health and addiction treatment systems in recent years has signaled a dramatic shift in the expectation for positive outcomes for individuals who experience mental health and/or substance use disorders. The value of recovery and recovery-oriented systems of care is widely accepted by states, communities, health care providers, peers, families, researchers, and advocates.

The process of recovery and wellness maintenance is personal and occurs via many pathways. It may include clinical treatment, medications, faith-based approaches, peer support, family support, self-care, and other approaches. Recovery supports promote individual, program, and system-level approaches that foster health and resilience (including helping individuals with behavioral health needs to “be well,” manage symptoms, and achieve and maintain abstinence); increase housing to support recovery; reduce barriers to employment, education, and other life goals; transition individuals from institutional settings to community living; and connect to necessary social supports in their chosen community. Focus areas for recovery and wellness maintenance:

- **Housing and homelessness:** A lack of safe housing is a huge challenge to the recovery and wellness of individuals with mental illness or addiction. This is often due to a lack of work history or gaps in employment, a criminal background, or a negative credit history. Supportive housing can provide the stable environment people need to successfully work toward positive goals. Appropriate housing also is a key to rebalancing Ohio’s long-term care options, saving taxpayer dollars, and increasing independence for people who do not require institutional care. Such housing should allow and align with evidence-based treatment plans (including medications) when indicated.
- **Employment and benefit planning:** Not only does meaningful employment help pay the bills, but can also provide a person with a sense of pride and belonging. It offers opportunities to connect with others socially. Unfortunately, the current rate of employment among people with behavioral health conditions is low despite research that strongly supports the critical impact that work plays in enhancing an individual’s recovery. The factors that lead to low rates of

employment in individuals with behavioral health conditions parallel those which create problems to those trying to obtain safe and stable housing. In addition, cash and medical assistance benefits provide essential support for many people with behavioral health needs who are unable to achieve competitive full-time employment.

- **Peer support and peer-run organizations:** Through the promotion of sharing personal experience and knowledge, individuals engaged in peer support play an active and vital role in laying the foundations for sustained recovery. Peers are an important part of Ohio’s behavioral health workforce. “Peer recovery supporter” is an all-inclusive term consisting of peer specialists, recovery coaches, and peer supporters. As individuals with lived experience, peers offer a unique type of support for people in treatment, recovery, or those working to manage their illness.

Consumer-operated services (also known as peer recovery organizations) and recovery community organizations provide services or activities that are planned, developed, administered, delivered, and evaluated by people, a majority of whom have a direct lived experience of a mental health and/or substance use disorder. The peer-run organizations have a primary goal of enhancing the quantity and quality of support available to individuals seeking recovery from mental health or substance use disorders.

To address recovery support gaps, the RecoveryOhio Advisory Council recommends:

- **47. A Housing Plan**
Review and create a comprehensive plan for safe, affordable, and quality housing that will meet the needs of individuals with mental health and substance use disorders so they can fully participate in community and family life. The plan will include supported housing options, transitional housing, recovery housing, adult care facilities, and short-term stabilization options to provide housing stability and choice. The plan will recognize that housing for people with mental health and substance use disorders will allow for and coordinate with treatment providers to ensure alignment of individuals’ treatment plans, including medications. This plan must consider the housing barriers faced by people who have criminal records and evaluate options for individuals who may not be able to live independently to provide the highest quality of life possible.

- **48. Recovery-Friendly Communities and Workplaces**
Support the development of recovery-friendly environments in all sectors, schools, communities and workplaces to promote and sustain health and wellness goals. Put resources toward peer recovery organizations, recovery community organizations, recovery high schools, collegiate recovery communities, and alternative peer groups.
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- **49. Focusing on Employment**
Provide incentives and risk management strategies to support employers and business owners in hiring employees recovering from mental illness and addiction and in supporting these employees in their ongoing success in the workplace. Coordinate federal and state resources to expand supported employment services models for people with mental illness and addiction. Reduce barriers to employment for people with criminal histories.
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- **50. Engaging the Faith Community**
Work with the Governor’s Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives to uncover and leverage current community faith-based recovery support alternatives to augment existing community recovery support programs.
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- **51. Reducing Transportation Barriers**
Examine transportation barriers and find ways to reduce them to permit consistent participation in treatment and recovery support and consider technological solutions to these barriers that may be more effective and efficient.
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- **52. Greater Mental Health Advocacy**
Support the re-establishment of a statewide mental health peer-run organization led by individuals with lived experience, that, at a minimum, includes advocacy and speakers’ bureau training.
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- **53. Strategies for Human Trafficking Survivors**
Work with the Department of Public Safety, the Ohio Human Trafficking Commission, the Governor’s Human Trafficking Task Force, local coalitions and faith-based providers to develop trauma-informed intervention recovery and support strategies and programs for victims of human trafficking.

■ 54. Support for Families

Link families affected by mental illness and substance use disorders to trainings, grief and trauma support groups, and other resources.



7. Specialty Populations

The RecoveryOhio Advisory Council and the RecoveryOhio State Team are committed to addressing the unique needs of all Ohioans. In preparation for this report, the RecoveryOhio Advisory Council spoke about two “specialty” populations: individuals involved in the criminal justice system and youths. The council recognizes that the two groups represent only a small percentage of the population of the state. Moving forward, both the RecoveryOhio Advisory Council and the RecoveryOhio State Team intend to continue their work serving all specialty populations, including older adults, veterans, and racial and ethnic minorities.

Ohio’s prisons and jails have become defacto treatment centers for those with severe and persistent mental health needs, substance use disorders, or both. Individuals involved in the criminal justice system have unique, complicating factors that could create barriers to long-term health and recovery.

The ability to get a job, build life skills, or have a safe place to stay can be challenging for anyone leaving criminal justice settings, but when these challenges are coupled with a mental illness, a substance use disorder, and/or other physical issues it may seem that recovery and wellness are impossible. Decades of addressing mental illness and addiction as a public safety crisis rather than a public health crisis resulted in escalated incarceration rates, which has been particularly devastating to racial and ethnic minorities who, as individuals, families, and communities, continue to live with the consequences.

The second specialty population of great concern to the RecoveryOhio Advisory Council is Ohio’s youth. Many of our youth are especially at risk for exposure to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)

that can result in problems that occur presently and may continue later into life, including depression, substance use disorders, school difficulties, chronic diseases, or even premature death, including death from suicide. These are complicated when parents and others close to the young person are struggling with mental illness or addiction, themselves. In this public health crisis, we must do what we can to prevent, intervene early, and address mental health conditions and substance use disorders so that every child in Ohio can have a fruitful, long life.

To address the needs of Ohio’s specialty populations, the RecoveryOhio Advisory Council is breaking down its recommendations into two categories: Individuals involved in the criminal justice system and youths.

Individuals Involved in the Criminal Justice System

The interface between the behavioral health and criminal justice systems is significant. The increased involvement of people with mental illness and/or substance use disorders in the criminal justice system is a serious problem. Treatment providers, law enforcement, courts, jails, and prisons have joined with consumers and family members in addressing this difficult situation. By connecting individuals with clinical treatment and/or pre-release care coordination services, they are more likely to get well and make positive life changes.

Local communities are encouraged to develop collaborative relationships between the behavioral health and criminal justice systems so that individuals with mental illness and/or alcohol and other drug addiction receive the care they need on a continuous basis. This, in turn, helps to reduce recidivism, improve public safety, and minimize the risk of harm to law enforcement and those with whom they come in contact.

Services available to those involved in local justice systems include funding for psychotropic medications, including medication-assisted treatment; administrative costs for case management services; and treatment and recovery services for court-involved individuals and their families. Collaboration among treatment and recovery support providers, ADAMH Boards, health departments, law enforcement, courts, jails, prisons, consumers, and family members contribute to public safety and promote recovery for the well-being of Ohioans.

Specialty Dockets

A specialized docket is a court that offers a therapeutically-oriented judicial approach and provides court supervision coordinated with appropriate treatment to individuals. Since the establishment of Ohio’s first drug court in 1995, the state has been established as a forerunner in

the national specialized dockets movement. The spectrum of specialized dockets offered in Ohio is vast and diverse, including, but not limited to: adult and juvenile drug and mental health courts, family dependency treatment, veteran treatment, operating a vehicle under the influence (OVI), and substance abuse and mental illness (SAMI), juvenile treatment, human trafficking, re-entry, and domestic violence dockets. The jurisdictions of Ohio's specialized dockets include court of common pleas, general, juvenile and domestic relations divisions, as well as municipal and county courts.

Specialized dockets that target high-risk, high-need addicted parents charged with abuse, neglect, and dependency of their minor children are shown to increase the number of children able to remain in their homes due to the involvement of child protective services who provide oversight and supervision that assists families in developing and maintaining a safe home environment. Additionally, there are increased rates of reunifying with their parents, children who were removed from their homes.

To address concerns about incarcerated individuals with mental health conditions and/or substance use disorders, the RecoveryOhio Advisory Council recommends:

■ **55. Criminal Justice Reform**

Anticipate the impact of criminal justice reforms on demand for treatment and recovery supports and the corresponding availability of these services. Ensure reforms are enacted without bias toward any specific drug so that individuals with any substance use disorder have an equal opportunity to access treatment and recovery support services in lieu of jail time. And, recognize the effects these changes will also have on other systems, such as child welfare.

■ **56. Decreasing the Supply of Drugs**

Continue to coordinate efforts between the Ohio Department of Public Safety and the Ohio Attorney General's Office to work with law enforcement agencies to expand proven drug task force models that specifically target and disrupt the flow of money and drugs from cartels that target individuals struggling with substance use disorders.

■ **57. Alternatives to Incarceration**

Increase diversion opportunities through crisis stabilization or deflection centers to ensure that individuals in need of treatment get treatment instead of using jails as defacto holding centers.

■ **58. Specialty Courts**

Expand access to specialty courts for people and families with mental illness and addiction and increase the number of specialty dockets that embrace trauma-informed best practices and family-centered approaches.

■ **59. Competency Restoration**

Amend the in-patient competency restoration process to emphasize treatment and community access to services, especially for misdemeanor offenses. This will have the positive result of returning the use of in-patient hospital beds to those individuals in psychiatric crisis without criminal justice involvement and decrease wait time for admission. It will also help meet the long-term clinical and safety needs of individuals and communities.

■ **60. Treatment While Incarcerated**

Enhance continuity of care and introduce new treatment opportunities, including counseling, medication, and other supports, to individuals with mental health and substance use disorders who are incarcerated in community-based correctional facilities, jails, prisons, and halfway houses. The treatment would promote recovery, minimize disruption in care, reduce recidivism and promote wellness.

■ **61. More Programs for Incarcerated Women**

Expand programs that address the unique needs of women, particularly pregnant and mothers, who are increasingly being incarcerated in Ohio's prison and community-based correction facilities.

■ **62. Attention to Re-entry and Reintegration**

Implement research-informed re-entry and reintegration strategies that help individuals exiting the criminal justice system to transition successfully back into the community. Disseminate best practices on strategies for promoting recovery from mental illness and addiction to treatment providers who focus on criminogenic behaviors and to re-entry professionals. Ensure consistent local implementation of Ohio Medicaid enrollment policies in all 88 counties for Ohioans in jails.

Youths

A recent report by the Ohio Council of Behavioral Health & Family Services Providers stated, “Today’s children are tomorrow’s parents, community leaders, workforce and the key to our state’s economic success.”⁷ Recent studies have found that mental health and substance use disorders in children are quite common, and frequently go untreated or undertreated. A recent study found that between 17.8 and 19.9 percent of children between birth and age 17 have a mental health disorder and that only 53.4 percent of these children receive treatment, ranking Ohio 28th among all states. Despite this information, substance use and mental health screenings are not routinely used, putting the state’s youth population at risk for crisis and substance abuse later in life.

In 2018, more than 15,000 children were served through Ohio’s child welfare system in out-of-home care, with one-half of them placed due to parental substance use disorders, Ohio must build protective factors, programs, and services to protect and support healthy development of our children. For youths involved in foster care the trauma caused by these out-of-home placements, as well as the events that occurred leading to the placements, often results in feelings of fear and helplessness. These are normal responses to abnormal events, not signs of weakness and may lead to lifelong problems. Children need to know that they’re safe and that people care and will help them through whatever events they have experienced. Caregivers, teachers, and service providers can be more effective in providing care and support if they are trauma-informed and sensitive to a child’s needs.

As children grow, mental, social, and emotional challenges are exacerbated during the transition from youth to adulthood. This can result in problems in multiple life domains, including housing, education, employment, quality of life, and life skills. Best practices for serving transition-age youths incorporate the principles of recovery, resiliency, and cultural competence. In addition, the care during these critical ages must be youth-guided and family-driven so that our children feel loved and supported and can lead healthy lives.

To address the gaps with the youth continuum of care, the RecoveryOhio Advisory Council recommends:

■ **63. Looking at the Needs of Youths and Families**

Convene a focus group, including state agencies, experts, families, and other parties, to review the needs of youths and families. Specifically, the group should prepare strategies to implement the Joint Legislative Committee on Multi-System Youth Recommendations (June, 2016). Particular attention should be given to:

- Improving access to early intervention depression, substance use, and adverse experiences/trauma.
- Promoting evidence-based, outcomes-focused treatment services.
- Promoting treatment for kids in homes and communities while preventing out-of-home placements.
- Exploring options to help kids assimilate back into homes and communities following out-of-home treatment.
- Promote appropriate levels of care coordination and case management across systems for multisystem youths.
- Providing access to a mental health professional in every school.

■ **64. Focusing on Juvenile Justice**

Continue, and improve upon, the RECLAIM program to ensure youths have access to treatment in lieu of incarceration. Review the transition process for youths to adult prison facilities to ensure that incarcerated young adults benefit from services and environments that are specific to their age and development level.

■ **65. Examining Crisis Services**

Ohio should evaluate the crisis service infrastructure to improve services and resources for youths and their families.

■ **66. Concentrating on Foster Care and Child Welfare**

Embrace best practices in cross-system collaboration among state entities — including the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, the Supreme Court of Ohio, the Ohio Department of Medicaid, and the Ohio Department of Health — that will expand resources and technical assistance to local communities for families involved with the child welfare system and who are experiencing substance use, mental illness, and co-occurring disorders. Support efforts to meet the demand for foster care while reducing the need for foster care. Build resources to support foster care and kinship caregivers, such as grandparents, in meeting the needs of children with significant behavioral and emotional problems.

7. The Ohio Council of Behavioral Health & Family Services Providers, Ohio Council Children’s Policy Priorities ,2019. www.theohiocouncil.org

- **67. Providing a Full Continuum of Care for Ohio's Children, Youths, and Young Adults**
Review the continuum of services available to Ohio's youths, young adults, and families to determine gaps and create strategies for timely access to appropriate care for Ohio's youngest citizens and their parents living in all 88 counties.

- **68. Focusing on Organizations For Youths**
Expand collaboration among organizations meeting the prevention, treatment, and recovery needs of Ohio's young people and organizations serving youths, such as Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCAs and others. Support the growth of recovery high schools, collegiate recovery communities, and alternative peer groups for youths recovering from mental illness and substance use disorders.

- **69. Meeting the Respite and Support Needs of Families**
Create a plan to meet the distinct needs of families of children and youths with severe emotional disorders and provide respite and support for these caregivers.

Other Specialty Populations

To address the needs of other specialty populations, the RecoveryOhio Advisory Council recommends:

- **70. Expanding Services for Seniors**
Explore partnership opportunities among the Ohio Departments of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Aging, and Health that will expand support and services for senior citizens experiencing neglect and abuse. Expand prevention and education services to older adults at risk of mental illness and/or substance use disorders. Increase screening of older adults for mental illness and substance use disorders. Support grandparents who are providing kinship care to children who are not able to remain in their homes due to parental substance use disorder or mental illness.
- **71. More Treatment Options for People With Eating Disorders**
Assure that a full continuum eating disorder treatment is available within the state.

- **72. Greater Support for First Responders**
Give backing to collaborative strategies that increase the local support available to first responders exposed to secondary trauma and promote suicide-prevention efforts.



8. Data Measurement and System Linkage

Finally, the RecoveryOhio Advisory Council met and discussed data, outcomes measurement, and the need for multisystem connections to create a behavioral health service delivery system in line with the needs of all Ohioans. To that end, the RecoveryOhio Advisory Council recommends:

- **73. Data Coordination and Sharing for Planning and Care Coordination**
Use data available through all state agencies and their local partners to support planning and resource allocation focused on ending Ohio's mental health and addiction public health crisis. Support the development of a technology infrastructure and data linkage strategies for partners at the state and local level, including ADAMH boards, managed care organizations, health departments, school districts, housing planning councils, and criminal justice system to perform data-informed planning at the community level. Support community-based treatment providers in their ability to participate in health-information exchanges for enhanced care coordination and integration with physical health care to improve outcomes for individual patients. Work with federal partners to reduce barriers created by federal privacy laws to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of access to information.

■ **74. Measuring Outcomes**

Develop a key performance indicator monitoring system to improve the quality of care for mental health and addiction services and quality of life measurements for individuals and families. Recognize the need for timely data to effectively respond to ever-changing trends and patterns in drug trafficking, disease prevalence, service capacity and workforce demand throughout the state. Minimize administrative complexity for data entry and reporting. Ensure that data measures equity in access to care in health and criminal justice settings and in outcome achievement for racial and ethnic minorities.

■ **75. Setting Up a Satisfaction Survey**

Survey individuals and families to establish satisfaction with services and supports for individuals and families with mental health and substance use disorders in Ohio.

RecoveryOhio

Advisory Council

Initial Report

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