

ADAMH Board adds new PR person to get word out

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MEDINA — The Medina County Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Board has hired a community relations director to provide community outreach in an effort to inform the public on the board's mission and growing number of services.

Kristen Hoffert-Leja was hired Jan. 4.

"The key for her, with everything going on and an increase in need and programming, this will provide a better avenue for access for our residents," ADAMH Board Executive Director Phillip Titterington said.

Hoffert-Leja will help promote awareness and assist the community in navigating the various services and resources provided by the ADAMH Board. A new release stated the board is committed to assuring the availability of high-quality services to all Medina County residents and is aware that accessing the necessary information can often be overwhelming.

Previously, the board said it believed its mission and responsibilities were unknown or unfamiliar to many residents, creating a barrier of knowledge about resources available. Now, the board want to change that by spreading the word.

Titterington told Medina County commissioners Tuesday that mental health and crisis support are needed now more than ever during the COVID-19 pandemic. He said it's being reported nationally that residents are seeing a fraction of what will be long-lasting negative effects from the pandemic.

Titterington said the human services levy has helped fill in gaps not covered by any other funding sources, such as federal and state funding which he said has not kept up with the increase in needs.

In December, the newly named 24/7 Crisis & Behavioral Health Helpline had 300 engagements, including 12 active rescues, 35 individuals presenting with suicidal tendencies and six referrals to the Crisis Intervention Team for law enforcement assistance in managing a mental health concern.

In comparison, there were 3,147 total crisis engagements in 2019. There was a 35 percent increase in 2020 to 4,254.

Titterington said the ADAMH Board has been able to use levy funding to build, support and expand a comprehensive and effective recovery support system. Among them are: Hope Recovery Community, which operates out of a home at 200 Highland Drive in Medina, owned by the ADAMH Board.

The ADAMH Board provided funding to OhioGuidestone to partner with Home Recovery Community and develop a certified peer recovery support network. There are seven certified peer supporters providing support to 234 individuals, with additional peer supporters being trained.

Between October and January, Home Recovery Community had more than 12,000 recovery touches, which included visits to the center, Zoom sessions, peer support situations, programming and groups. In November and December alone, 47 individuals were linked to detox, residential treatment and/or recovery housing.

The ADAMH Board was able to assist Cathy's House, a certified recovery house, in expanding, which allowed for the addition of two male beds and one female bed. The facility at 515 W. Liberty St., Medina, is able to serve 12 males and seven females.

Several agencies have combined forces with Cathy's House and is attempting to purchase a male recovery house in the county. Those raising funds for the effort is the ADAMH Board, Heartland Community Church, Medina Metropolitan Housing, Catholic Charities, Habitat for Humanity and Operation HOMES, to name a few.

The board secured a state capital grant for the construction the Discovery Recovery House, a 12-bed women's recovery house set to open in April at 189 Northland Drive.

Next door, the board applied for state funding to open a Youth and Family Trauma Center outpatient clinic to be operated by Alternative Paths. Alternative Paths and HRC will partner to add peer supporters in the Medina County Jail to assist inmates with their transition into the community.

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