



# **Mental Health and Recovery Services Board**

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **It's Not Just Opioids**

written by Mircea Handru, MBA

While the opioid crisis continues to make headlines, we must ensure that our responses focus not just on opioid addiction, but on all substance use disorders and other addictions. The benefit of having a local mental health and recovery services Board is to ensure that programs and services match the community needs and are not one-size fits all across the state or the nation.

The federal government and the State of Ohio invested significant funding into fighting the opioid epidemic (thank you!). However, much of this funding creates challenges for rural communities with limited treatment capacity. Rural communities may not have the capacity to meet rigid grant requirements. One-time funds from federal and state sources make it very difficult to sustain programs at the local level, knowing that all this funding may not be available in 12 to 24 months. In addition, a majority of these grants allow only for very specific treatment and recovery support practices and don't take into account the impact of other drug trends (meth, cocaine, spice, K2, etc).

Our role is to make sure that programs are built in a sustainable way to ensure ongoing access to resources in the community. We also need to take into account current needs and trends, which may be different in our community in comparison to other urban areas. Last, we need to make sure that we have resources to help anyone with a substance use disorder or other addiction. We should have necessary resources that provide programming not only for opioid use disorders, but also for individuals struggling with meth, cocaine, alcohol, or gambling.

Local Boards should be allowed to have more discretionary powers when planning and implementing services in its local communities based on the local need. One-time grants, while we are grateful for them, are difficult to be incorporated in the long-term planning and continuum of care for behavioral health services in local communities.

To access addiction or mental health treatment services and support, please call the Board's office at **419-448-0640**.

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