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ADAMHS Board of Cuyahoga County Announces CEO Retirement and Executive Search

Cuyahoga County, OH – Eugenia Cash, LSW, MSSA, CDCA, Chair of the Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board of Cuyahoga County today announced that William M. Denihan will be retiring from his position as Chief Executive Officer effective August 1, 2017, and that the Board is launching its search for a new Chief Executive Officer.

“Chief Denihan has led a long and distinguished career in public service which has included his extraordinary leadership of the ADAMHS Board for the past 15 years,” stated Ms. Cash. “His dedication to individuals and families living with mental illness and addiction has been evident every day of his service to the Board and the community.”

Ms. Cash further expressed that Mr. Denihan’s career with the ADAMHS Board includes many noteworthy accomplishments, including the merger of the Cuyahoga County Community Mental Health Board (CCCMHB) and the Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services Board of Cuyahoga County that culminated with the creation of the ADAMHS Board on July 1, 2009.

“Working in government for over 35 years at the time of the consolidation I can tell you that opportunities for change are few and far between,” expressed Mr. Denihan as he reflected upon his accomplishments with the Board. “Both Boards had the desire to work with the community and each other and take the necessary steps to plan a thorough and successful process that saved \$4.4 million in administrative, personnel and facility costs that were redirected back into services.”

Through his leadership beginning with the CCCMHB in 2002, the Board has weathered many financial ups and downs, including state and county budget cuts to the awarding of federal grants and increased funding from the County’s Health and Human Services levy. He also was instrumental in creating the Board’s Client Art Program that recognizes the importance of art in the recovery process. Other accomplishments include expansion of the Board’s involvement in every stage of criminal justice, including diversion, incarceration and community re-entry, fighting for mental health insurance parity in the State of Ohio that became a reality in 2006 and the creation of Seasons of Hope -- a safe house for women living with addictions who can seek help with no questions asked – as a response to the Imperial Avenue tragedies of 2009.

More recent accomplishments include his leadership as Chair of the Mental Health Response Advisory Committee (MHRAC) which is a component of the Settlement Agreement between the City of Cleveland and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) that addresses concerns about the Cleveland Division of Police use-of-force policies and practices. The City of Cleveland selected the ADAMHS Board to establish the MHRAC and assist with the Police Crisis Intervention Program. He is also striving to develop a dedicated levy to raise much needed funding to meet the continuing demand for mental health and addiction services in Cuyahoga County and find a solution to the current heroin tsunami that is plaguing our community.

The ADAMHS Board of Directors has formed a Search Committee, seeking both internal and external candidates, composed of Ms. Cash, the six members of the Executive Committee and two Board Members. The Board has engaged the consulting services of BVU: The Center for Nonprofit Excellence to provide guidance during the search process, including training to the committee, defining position criteria and candidate competencies and leadership attributes. A CEO employment announcement will be released within the next few weeks.

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