

Letter to the Editor in Response to Police Mistreatment of Man Living With Mental Illness

In response to [an article in Cleveland.com](#), **Scott S. Osiecki**, CEO, submitted a Letter to the Editor on behalf of the ADAMHS Board of Directors and staff, which appeared in print on June 26, and [online](#). In addition, at the direction of our Board of Directors, a letter was sent to the Mayor and the Police Chief in Garfield Heights, denouncing the action of the officers and encouraging them to enroll officers in law enforcement trainings offered by the ADAMHS Board.

ADAMHS Board of Directors Approved Resolution Declaring Racism a Public Health Crisis

At the General Board meeting on June 24, the ADAMHS Board of Directors approved a resolution declaring racism a public health crisis. This resolution states that the ADAMHS Board will work tirelessly to achieve equity and a healthy community where racism is not tolerated. The ADAMHS Board commits to:

- Acknowledge racism as a public health crisis and build alliances and partnerships that confront and work collaboratively to end racism.
- Develop local solutions to address disparities and actively engage individuals and communities in racial and social justice work.
- Develop, implement, and support policies and practices to end the inequalities in the health of people of color and mitigate exposure to adverse childhood experiences and trauma.
- Ensure health equity and cultural competence within all mental health and substance use disorder prevention, treatment, and recovery support programs, ensuring services meet the local needs of diverse populations.
- Engage ALL communities to work with state and local behavioral health leaders to develop and promote prevention and awareness efforts designed to reduce stigma, address trauma, and eliminate barriers to care.

Read the entire resolution on the ADAMHS Board website: adamhsc.org.

The Unedited Letter to the Editor Reads:

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of the Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board of Cuyahoga County, I am writing to express sadness and frustration over the horrendous treatment and violent arrest of Mr. Kenta Settles, an individual living with mental illness, by Garfield Heights Police Officers Michael Malak and Robert Pitts. One of our Board members, whose son lives with mental illness, said, "I am appalled and sickened by the actions of the officers, knowing that he could have been my son. We must take immediate action to provide our resources and training to this police department."

People living with a behavioral health issue, as well as all people, have a right to be treated with dignity and respect. The blatant disregard in this incident proves that the Garfield Heights Police Department, as well as many police departments, can benefit from being trained or retrained in identifying individuals living with mental illness and/or substance use issues, as well as de-escalation techniques.

The ADAMHS Board of Cuyahoga County has a long history of working in partnership with law enforcement agencies to provide Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) and other specialized training and have trained many law enforcement officers throughout the county who take their duty to protect the public – including persons with mental illness – very seriously, and act with dignity and respect. We understand the hardships law enforcement officers face every day on the job and appreciate the service they provide to the community. We also know that training and understanding go a long way in engagement and de-escalation of similar situations.

The ADAMHS Board offers full CIT training at least three times per year and are willing and able to offer smaller trainings throughout the year to any law enforcement agency in Cuyahoga County. We implore the entire community to take advantage of these resources and become part of a community-wide solution.

Board Member Gregory X. Boehm, M.D. Testified Before Congress

In June, Board Member **Gregory X. Boehm, M.D.** testified remotely to Congress with **Senator Portman's** office in collaboration with the **Academy of Addiction Medicine (ASAM)** to discuss the increased need for mental health and addiction treatment during the pandemic. Specifically, that funding should be set aside for reimbursement of mental health and addiction treatment providers that did not receive relief during the pandemic.

Dr. Boehm also shared his experience treating homeless addicted patients for the last 18 years. In his position as Regional ASAM Director for Ohio, Pennsylvania and New Jersey, his testimony also focused on legislation ASAM is advocating for, including the establishment of MAT in all federal, state and county prisons and jails.



Gregory X. Boehm, M.D.

ADAMHS Board Announces New Board Members and Reappointments

Two new members have been appointed to the Board of Directors by the **Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS)**, **Ashwani Bhardwaj** and **Jena Olsen**.



Ashwani Bhardwaj is President of **Avon Tech Staffing Solutions, Inc.**, an organization with experience in finance and accounting. Mr. Bhardwaj also has experience as a speaker and Board member for ethnicity and addiction issues. Community affiliations include his participation as a member of the **Advisory Committee of Chia Chen's Asian Planning Board**, a volunteer with the **Greater Cleveland Shiva Vishnu Temple** since 2010, and past President (2014-2015) and member of the **Marwari Association of Northeast Ohio**.



Jena Olsen is the Development and Events Coordinator for **Malachi House**, an organization that ministers to individuals who need an available caregiver, who have limited or no financial resources and are in need of special home care in the final stages of life. She is a trustee of the **International Women's Air and Space Museum**, the **Association of Fundraising Professional Board** and **Junior League**.

Steve Killpack, MS, was appointed to the Board by **OhioMHAS** after serving as a County appointment. **Rev. Benjamin F. Gohlstin, Sr.** and **Crystal L. Bryant, Esq., MS, LSW** were reappointed by the County. At the June 24 General Meeting, the recommended slate of officers for FY2021 through FY2022 was also voted on and approved. **Rev. Benjamin F. Gohlstin, Sr.** will serve as Board Chair, **J. Robert Fowler, Ph.D.** as Vice Chair and **Kathleen Kern-Pilch, ATR-BC, LPC-S** as Second Vice Chair. Also at the June 24 meeting, we bid farewell to Board Member **Megan Van Voorhis**.



Congratulations to Rev. Benjamin F. Gohlstin, Sr., Board Chair, who recently became a Certified Grief Recovery Method Specialist through the Grief Recovery Institute.

ADAMHS Board and FrontLine Services In the News: Local Racial Unrest Led to Increase in Mental Health Calls

The ADAMHS Board and **FrontLine Services** weighed in for a **News 5** story on how ongoing racial and civil unrest, following the Minneapolis police-involved murder of George Floyd, had calls for help up 25 to 30 percent over the two week period following the incident.

ADAMHS Board Distributed 12,500 Cloth Masks to Provider Agencies

The ADAMHS Board distributed approximately 12,500 cloth masks to treatment providers, peer run organizations, adult care facilities and recovery homes for residents and staff during a drive through distribution event held on June 11. Thank you to the **Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS)** for procuring the masks through a donation from the **U.S. Department of Homeland Security**.

Thank you to everyone who helped get these masks picked up, packed up and distributed to agencies across Cuyahoga County!



Scott S. Osiecki, CEO, told News 5 the ongoing effort to create change across the country has a growing number of people dealing with stress and a fear of the unknown. "The entire community is trying to manage the current situation that we all find ourselves in," Osiecki said. "Individuals living with addiction and mental health issues in Cuyahoga County are really feeling the stress. Since the demonstrations within the last week, there has been a 25% increase in calls to the Warmline, and these calls were about specifically dealing with anxiety. People are afraid, people are also uncomfortable about how to talk about the situation."

Jane Granzier, Associate Director of Crisis Services at FrontLine Service, told News 5 calls to the 24-hour Suicide Prevention, Mental Health/Addiction Crisis, Information and Referral Hotline are up significantly. Granzier said the African American community is facing growing frustration. "Adult mental health, those calls have really escalated in April and May," Granzier said. "Telling somebody things are going to get better right away is just not true. Doing the work of therapy, talking to someone, and processing this is tough stuff. It's frustration for our country, that we're not further along than we are, which I think is chronic."

[Read the full story here.](#)

Expanding Census 2020 Outreach Efforts

For the past year, the ADAMHS Board has been involved in 2020 Census outreach efforts. **Scott S. Osiecki**, CEO, is tri-chair of the Hard to Count Communities subcommittee of the Cuyahoga County Complete Count Committee, along with **Joe Cimperman** from **Global Cleveland** and **Daniel Ortiz** from **Policy Matters**. It's important to get everyone counted because Census results are used to direct the distribution of billions of dollars in federal funds to local communities for schools, roads, SNAP, Medicaid, health clinics and other public services.

A more targeted outreach campaign is necessary to increase responses in communities of Cuyahoga County that are at risk of being undercounted. The ADAMHS Board has put together an outreach campaign to target the City of Cleveland and East Cleveland, both of which have Census tracts with the lowest responses in Cuyahoga County at or below 30% response as of early June. These cities are at risk of being undercounted, which would result in federal funding disinvestment impacting the community for the next ten years. Through targeted digital, radio, print and sound truck advertisements, the ADAMHS Board hopes to help increase response rates in these areas by at least 10% by the end of the campaign. The County and the Complete Count Committee also held a Light Up the Night forum to Promote Racial Equity and A Complete Census Count on June 24.



Advertisements, like the one above, will be shared online and through print ads to encourage completion of 2020 Census questionnaires.

Monthly Client Art Display Program is Now Virtual!

The monthly art display program that typically showcases client artwork in the Ohio Room at the ADAMHS Board office is now virtual. Thank you to **Cynthia** for displaying her artwork this month in our new [virtual platform](#)! This virtual art display program will continue through the end of 2020 and will showcase new artists each month.



If you have not filled out your Census questionnaire yet, fill it out online at www.my2020census.gov or by phone at 844-330-2020. The self-response deadline has been extended to October 31, 2020.

OACBHA Released New Resource on Recovery During a Pandemic

Whether dealing with mental illness and/or addiction, recovery can be hard in the best of times. The COVID-19 pandemic is changing our way of living. As our state, our nation, and our world face this pandemic, we continue to practice social distancing, work from home, work in a high risk location, homeschool children, experience job loss, confront food insecurity, and live in an environment of extreme uncertainty. This pandemic represents a substantial challenge for everyone, and may have compounding effects for individuals in recovery. The **Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities** (OACBHA) put together a [one-pager](#) with information about how to support yourself or others in recovery during a pandemic.

Cuyahoga County Saw Huge Spike in Overdose Deaths in May

May was the worst month for fatal drug overdose in Cuyahoga County ever. Read the full **Medical Examiner's** report [here](#). Please share messaging about naloxone and **Project DAWN**. **Circle Health Services** is back open for Project DAWN Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Naloxone (Narcan) is an opiate blocker (antagonist) that can reverse the effects of an opiate overdose. The ADAMHS Board encourages everyone in the community to carry naloxone. Fentanyl test strips are also available through funding from the County and ADAMHS Board. Fentanyl test strips are easy to use and can detect fentanyl in drug residue. Anyone using illicit drugs – heroin, cocaine, crack – can use these strips to see if the drugs they bought contain fentanyl and make an informed decision about adjusting the use of that drug. Learn more about fentanyl test strips and where to get them at testyourdrugsc.com.

Community News

Several More Provider Agencies Received Funding from the Greater Cleveland COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund

On June 12, the Greater Cleveland COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund coalition announced its ninth round of grants to support the Greater Cleveland nonprofit community, which continues to face unprecedented challenges during the ongoing pandemic. A total of \$928,000 was awarded to eighteen organizations and groups serving Cuyahoga, Lake and Geauga counties. Several ADAMHS Board providers were among the recipients, including **Achievement Centers for Children, Life Exchange Center, Stella Maris and Women's Recovery Center.**

The rapid response fund partners plan to make grants through June, with the potential to extend grant opportunities as needed and as additional funding resources become available through new partners joining the effort.

NAMI Greater Cleveland and LGBT Center of Cleveland Partner to Offer Two New Virtual Support Groups

It was announced at the start of Pride Month that two new, free support groups are now available thanks to a partnership between **NAMI Greater Cleveland** and the **LGBT Center of Cleveland**. These support groups are open to anyone living with a mental health condition who wishes to come together to share coping strategies, provide others with encouragement, comfort, and advice; and create a sense of community. A group for LGBT seniors meets weekly from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. on Tuesdays. A general mental health support group meets weekly from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. on Thursdays. To register, contact Denise Astorino at LGBT Center at 216-243-7488 or the NAMI Helpline at 216-875-7776.

"The future depends on what you do today."
– Mahatma Gandhi, Social Activist, 1869 - 1948

Congratulations, Tom!



Thomas G. Williams, MA, M.Ed., ADAMHS Board Evaluation and Research Officer, was recently elected President of the **Ohio Program Evaluators' Group (OPEG).**

Tom previously served as Secretary of OPEG for two terms. OPEG is an affiliate of the **American Evaluation Association.** It was founded in 1980 by program evaluators in mental health organizations. Since then, it has grown to a vibrant organization of evaluators across Ohio and in neighboring states and represents a cross section of agencies, institutions and fields.

Thank you, Jake!

Jake Rosebrock has served as an **AmeriCorps VISTA** member with the ADAMHS Board for the past year, assisting the External Affairs department in community outreach and engagement.



Jake was a SUPER huge help during his year of service and will be missed! The cape in this photo is from an ACEs campaign he worked on. We wish him the best of luck as he starts dental school at Case Western Reserve University!

Jake said, "Reflecting back, this year has been one of great rewards in challenging times. I am proud to have been a part of the fentanyl test strip program, working towards getting more of our community into recovery, and challenging the stigma associated with addiction and mental health. It has been rewarding to see community members that were against the idea of fentanyl test strips later calling me to tell me that the strips were working and they wanted more."

"Recovery works, people do recover, and you all help make that happen every day! Thank you for the opportunity to serve with you this year."

Summer Training Institute

The ADAMHS Board is offering free, virtual training opportunities this summer on Zoom. All ten scheduled trainings have reached capacity. By the end of August, over 470 individuals will participate to earn CEUs and learn about new topics. New training opportunities can be found on the [training institute webpage.](#)

Ohio Prevention Conference: Online Training Series

The Ohio Prevention Conference, which usually takes place at the end of June in Columbus, was moved to an online format. Every Thursday at 11:00 a.m. through September 24, a free virtual training occurs. Attendees of live sessions receive continuing education hours for social workers, counselors, prevention specialists, and chemical dependency counselors. [Click here to see the series schedule and to register.](#)

Chardé Hollins, ADAMHS Board Behavioral Health Prevention Specialist, presented on June 18 about prevention for the resilient. She shared effective strategies for prevention in communities experiencing trauma. The experience of trauma significantly impacts many areas of a person's development and life functioning. These effects of trauma can ultimately influence a child's educational performance, social interactions and health development. In Chardé's workshop, participants learned about strategies for designing effective interventions to address the mental health of trauma-affected youth.

Virtual Client Information Meetings Will Be Held Through the End of 2020

The ADAMHS Board is hosting monthly virtual client information meetings on Zoom in 2020. The June meeting featured a presenter from the **Cuyahoga County Board of Health** who spoke about safely navigating in the community during a pandemic.

Board of Directors

Rev. Benjamin F. Gohlstin, Sr., Chair
J. Robert Fowler, Ph.D., Vice Chair
Katie Kern-Pilch, MA, ATR-BC, LPC-S, HLM (BATA), Second Vice Chair

Reginald C. Blue, Ph.D.
Gregory X. Boehm, M.D.
Crystal L. Bryant, Esq., MS, LSW
Erskine Cade, MBA
Elsie Caraballo
Gwendolyn A. Howard, LSW, MSSA
Patricia James Stewart, M.ED., LSW
Steve Killpack, MS
Max M. Rodas, MA
Sharon Rosenbaum, MBA
Harvey A. Snider, Esq.
Megan Van Voorhis

Scott S. Osiecki, Chief Executive Officer