



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **SMART Recovery Builds Momentum in Ohio** ***Public support key to growing impact on underserved populations***

(Cleveland, OH, February 18, 2020)

Just a few months ago the national office of SMART Recovery USA looked for help in reaching Ohioans struggling with all kinds of addictions. Now, thanks to timely support from the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS), the work is paying off.

Mark Ruth, SMART Recovery's Executive Director, summarizes the progress so far:

*When OhioMHAS decided to generously support our efforts to reach underserved populations and expand our recovery support groups for those dealing with problematic behaviors or substances, we were hopeful we'd see results quickly. And now, through our outreach and training efforts, that's exactly what is happening. We want to especially credit State Senator John Eklund, Sate Representative John M. Rogers, and Congressman David Joyce for their leadership and support."*

According to Lori Criss, OhioMHAS Director, SMART Recovery's approach is unique and has the potential to positively affect many Ohioans struggling with addictions:

*The process of recovery is highly personal. Having support is crucial to each person's success. Through this investment, we are providing additional options to help Ohioans achieve lasting recovery and wellness.*

This funding will support, among other things, statewide outreach to Veterans and those in rural areas in order to increase connections to SMART's free in-person recovery meetings. Meeting participants are then introduced to a wide variety of tools and resources to aid in their self-managed recovery. Additionally, Ruth says these funds will support increasing the number of online meetings:

*When it comes to those who cannot attend meetings in person due to a lack of transportation, family responsibilities, or physical disability, they now have an opportunity to participate from the convenience of their home. We are all about making sure that as few barriers exist to recovery as possible and that people have choices.*

Experts in recovery, the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and others agree that individuals experience better outcomes when allowed to choose among various approaches to recovery. SMART Recovery is quickly becoming the nation's most popular mutual support recovery group.

*We're grateful that the State of Ohio recognized that it is incredibly important to provide as many alternatives for those with substance use disorder to turn their lives around. And that's what we're doing."*

In addition to Veterans and those who live in rural areas, SMART will be using the OhioMHAS support for outreach to Ohio school systems. According to Lise Day, Grants Administrator for SMART:

*We need to create pilot programs with high schools and colleges to make SMART meetings available to young adults. By providing effective tools and information, they can make decisions that support positive behaviors and pave the way for a balanced, healthy lifestyle."*

Outreach efforts have already engaged more than 25 local organizations, many of which focus on underserved or discounted populations, e.g., courts and correctional facilities in Lake and Cuyahoga counties; veterans; juvenile treatment centers; and the LGBTQ Center.

Additional organizations that have responded positively to SMART's outreach include educational institutions such as Case Western Reserve University, Lakeland Community College, Baldwin Wallace University, and Perry and Wickliffe City Schools.

SMART Recovery plans to continue all these efforts in the coming months, building upon the momentum achieved since the grant's inception.

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SMART Recovery USA, Inc.® (Self-Management and Recovery Training) is a global, nonprofit organization that helps people overcome problematic addictive behavior through free in-person and online meetings. Participants use SMART to assume responsibility for their recovery using its 4-Point Program®. These foundational principles are: building and maintaining motivation; coping with urges; managing thoughts, feelings and behaviors; and living a balanced life.

Founded in 1994, the organization uses science-based techniques that have proven to be effective in helping individuals overcome addiction to drugs, alcohol, and harmful activities such as gambling. SMART has been endorsed by the leading government and medical authorities in Australia, the UK, and U.S. Learn more: [www.smartrecovery.org](http://www.smartrecovery.org).