



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Governor DeWine, Ohio Mental Health Agencies Launch New “Strive for Five” Challenge Aimed at Reaching out to 5 People a Day During the COVID-19 Crisis

COLUMBUS –As Ohioans begin week five at home amid the coronavirus crisis, the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) today joined with Governor Mike DeWine, Recovery Ohio, and local behavioral health partners to launch “Strive for 5” -- a new, statewide awareness campaign to help individuals and families cope with feelings of stress, anxiety, and isolation by connecting with others.



The campaign, which will be unveiled as part of OhioMHAS Director Lori Criss’ “Mental Health Monday” video on social media, encourages all Ohioans to reach out, connect and comfort each other while we all work our way through the COVID-19 crisis and physical distancing. The challenge is simple: individuals find five people in their life who they will check-in with via phone, email, chat, video, etc., during each of the next 30-days. The state has made a variety of social media messages and other campaign resources available at: OHSTRIVE5.org, or by sending an email request to: creativeservicesteam@mha.ohio.gov. Use the hashtag #OHStrive5.

“We encourage Ohioans to connect with people who may be isolated, lonely or live alone, and to reach out to neighbors, friends, families and co-workers,” Governor DeWine said. “First responders, healthcare workers and other individuals who are courageously keeping our essential services open also need support now, as do caregivers who are hard at work taking care of others.”

“The people we serve, in recovery from mental health or substance use related conditions, especially understand the great and unique power of personal peer to peer support and connection to others at times of crisis to allay the anxiety and fears we all face at this time,” added OhioMHAS Director Lori Criss. “Ohioans may not be able to touch each other physically, but we can certainly touch each other through these other forms of connection.”

The Strive for 5 Challenge was developed by the New York Coalition for Behavioral Health and brought to Ohio by the Mental Health, Addiction and Recovery Services Board of Lorain County.

“Our communities are full of caring people who want to help others manage stress, cope and thrive during this time. We took the lead on bringing Strive for 5 to Ohio to give all residents a simple, uplifting way to connect, and protect each other’s well-being,” said Elaine Georgas, interim director, Mental Health, Addiction and Recovery Services (MHARS) Board of Lorain County. “Particularly for persons who are alone, in recovery or just uncertain, each of us reaching out to five people every day for the next 30 days will make us stronger and resilient. I am proud to join our State partners in launching Ohio Strive for 5.”

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