

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Sheriff Kandy Fatheree

County of Summit • State of Ohio

Summit County Sheriff's Office receives grant to hire Addiction Services Coordinator at the County Jail

AKRON – Summit County Sheriff Kandy Fatheree is excited to announce that the Sheriff's Office has been awarded \$187,000 as part of an Opioid Remediation Grant through the Ohio Attorney General's Office.

Sheriff Fatheree intends to use the funds to contract with VitalCore Health Strategies to hire a full-time Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) to serve as an Addiction Services Coordinator at the Summit County Jail.

According to the [Ohio Attorney General's Office](#), around 65% of jail inmates nationwide are addicted to opioids or other substances. Fatheree estimates that an even larger number of inmates booked in Summit County are dealing with substance abuse disorders. "It's upwards of three-fourths in our jail," said the Sheriff.

Historically, most jails in the state, including Summit County, have provided limited medically assisted treatment to those with substance abuse disorders, in compliance with the Ohio Minimum Jail Standards. This treatment was largely focused on those in detox protocols or other special circumstances, such as pregnant women. Fatheree has been working to change that in Summit County and enact a more proactive approach to inmate substance abuse and addiction that is driven by evidence-based best practices, and that is in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

"So many inmates are being booked and face the immediate prospect of detox and withdrawal, which can be a dangerous time not only for them but for my deputies," said the Sheriff. "These individuals need care from a professional that specializes in these issues, and that can provide a treatment plan to help them recover and ideally avoid relapse."

The new Addiction Services Coordinator will be charged with assessing inmates upon their arrival and ensuring that those in need of treatment receive it as soon as possible. They will have the authority to prescribe medications for opiate use disorder, as well as formulate treatment plans, monitor progress, develop transitional care and re-entry planning, and collaborate with community treatment providers and social support services to ensure continued progress after release.

The Addiction Services Coordinator will also collaborate with the Common Pleas Court and Municipal Courts to ensure that individuals seeking medication assisted treatment are identified for referral to special docket treatment courts. The hope is that this specialized treatment will lead to increased compliance during their time at the jail and throughout the trial process and possibly lead to reduced terms of incarceration during sentencing.

“Many of these individuals have the desire and the inner strength that it takes to stay sober, but they need that initial helping hand to pull them up,” said Fatheree. “At the jail, we have an opportunity to reach them when they’re at their lowest point, and to provide the kind of treatment that can help ensure that we never have to see them in there again!”

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