

News Release



Ilene Shapiro – Summit County Executive
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Summit County Celebrates A Week to Change Direction

On Monday, June 3, 2019, Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro and Summit County Council passed a resolution declaring the week of June 9-15 as A Week to Change Direction. The resolution calls on Summit County residents to recognize the need to increase knowledge and support for efforts that are working to change the culture of mental health globally to ensure those in need receive the care and support they deserve.

The Change Direction initiative is a collection of concerned citizens, nonprofit leaders, and leaders from the private sector who have come together to change the culture about mental health, mental illness, and wellness. This initiative was inspired by a discussion at the White House National Conference on Mental Health in 2013, in the wake of the Newtown, Connecticut mass shooting. In 2016, Congressman Tim Ryan, then County Executive Russ Pry, the County of Summit Alcohol, Drug Addiction & Mental Health Board, and other local partners came together to create Change Direction Summit County. The local initiative has focused on bringing together diverse segments of the community—private business, clergy, non-profits and others—and encouraging them to educate their employees, congregations, and clients about emotional health.

In Summit County Public Health’s 2017 Community Health Improvement Plan, Mental Health and Addiction was identified as a priority area of concern by the community. Additionally, the department’s data indicate 1 in 5 adults in Summit County experience a mental health issue in a given year. This statistic mirrors the national trend of adults in the United States who experience a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

“When we are in physical pain, we go to the doctor. But what do we do when we are in mental and emotional pain? Too many of us almost never reach out for help or even tell someone,” said Executive Shapiro. “At the individual level and the community level, we must shift the way we think about and discuss mental health. That’s what this campaign is all about.”

Throughout the week of June 9-15, Executive Shapiro will host A Week to Change Direction lunch time events for staff members. The various events will educate staff about emotional well-being and explore different strategies for self-care.

To learn more about A Week to Change Direction, please visit <https://www.changedirection.org/a-week-to-change-direction/>.

To learn more about Change Direction Summit County, please visit <https://www.admboard.org/change-direction.aspx>.

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