

**Media Advisory**  
October 10, 2019



**For more information, contact:**

Greta Johnson  
Assistant Chief of Staff  
Office of Executive Shapiro  
330-643-2656  
[gjohnson@summitoh.net](mailto:gjohnson@summitoh.net)

**Summit County Executive Shapiro's Statement on Abatement Strategy for Opioid Settlements**

Over the past several years we have worked with leaders in our community to find meaningful solutions to the opioid epidemic which has affected so many lives in Summit County. In October of 2017, I declared a State of Emergency and soon thereafter I was joined by 21 of our communities and Summit County Public Health in filing a lawsuit holding opioid makers, distributors, and pharmacies accountable for their role in creating this crisis. As a result of these efforts, I recently approved several settlement agreements with defendants who were amenable to negotiations. Settlements were reached with Endo Pharmaceuticals, Allergan Pharmaceuticals, Mallinckrodt Pharmaceuticals, and Johnson & Johnson/Janssen Pharmaceuticals.

When this lawsuit was initiated, it was with the intent to bring about crucial changes in the defendants' corporate practices and to end the deceptive and fraudulent actions that fueled the opioid crisis in Summit County. We continue to fight for those changes and intend to use current and future funds obtained as a result of this litigation to abate the ongoing epidemic. As the October 21<sup>st</sup> trial date approaches, we have worked with our community partners to formulate a framework that will allow us to deploy current and future settlement dollars in a responsible and effective way. For now, the funds we have already received as a part of these settlements will remain on deposit in the County treasury as we work through the legal system to resolve our claims.

With the recovery effort in our hands locally, it becomes the responsibility of county leadership to translate every settlement dollar into effective opioid epidemic abatement tactics that benefit Summit County residents. Working with our community leaders, we have developed a plan to do exactly that.

This plan starts with the creation of a task force made up of professionals in the fields that deal with this crisis every day. They will have oversight authority to ensure funding goes to Summit County programs that help abate the opioid epidemic. This task force, the Opioid Abatement Advisory Council (OAAC), will be designated by the Summit County Executive, Mayor of the City of Akron, a Mayor selected by the Mayors Association of Summit County, a Township Trustee, and a representative of Summit County Public Health.

The OAAC will be charged with recommending programming to address four priority areas utilizing our settlement resources: Treatment, Harm Reduction, System Coordination, and Evidence-Based Prevention

and Education. These four areas will guide the collective action of the OAAC to turn settlement dollars into community impact. A summary of the plan is attached.

The epidemic continues to take a heavy toll on Summit County. In the past three years, more than 7,000 overdoses were reported by our emergency rooms. Just a few weeks ago, we lost five Summit County residents in a 24 hour period to opioid overdose. Our first responders, medical professionals, and addiction recovery specialists continue saving lives every day, but they have operated beyond capacity for far too long and need the resources to sustain their essential work for the years of recovery ahead. We are still in the State of Emergency I declared on 2017. I am confident that with the right resources and the right plan - our community can work together to positively impact this unprecedented public health crisis.

###