

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **County Executive and Council support Minority Health Month**

**SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO**—On Monday, March 28, Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro and County Council passed legislation declaring April Minority Health Month, calling attention to the health disparities that continue to affect racial and ethnic minority populations.

Minority Health Month’s origins date back to 1915 with the establishment of National Negro Health Week by Booker T. Washington. The initiative was later formalized and first recognized by Congress in 2002. It is now celebrated each April with the goal of recognizing the health inequalities facing minorities, and encouraging all health organizations to conduct appropriate programs and activities to promote healthfulness in minority and other health disparity communities. This year’s theme is “Give Your Community a Boost!” which aims to draw attention to the importance of vaccinations, including booster shots.

“Though health disparities exist throughout our nation, they can be reduced and prevented if we commit ourselves to improving the health of racial and ethnic minorities,” said County Executive Shapiro. “By working together with experts and healthcare providers to promote accurate and applicable health information and better access to care, we can improve the health of our minority communities.”

Locally, Summit County Public Health’s Office of Minority Health provides minority health data and technical assistance to local agencies working to improve the health status of minority populations. The office works to eliminate differences in health status between racial and ethnic minority and non-minority populations by providing leadership and guidance on best ways to address racial and ethnic health disparity and specific health needs of racial and ethnic minority groups.

“As we seek to create more equitable conditions for our residents, reducing health disparities is a critical piece of the conversation. Poor health keeps individuals from fully participating in their communities and disparities can affect the health of generations,” said Council Member Veronica Sims. “This conversation is especially important as we grapple with the increase in health disparities and poor health outcomes due to the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Summit County Public Health is sponsoring virtual cooking classes and the Minority Health Fair in support on Minority Health Month. Details for both events are available at <https://www.scph.org/omh/minority-health-month>.

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