

# NEWS RELEASE

**Ilene Shapiro – Summit County Executive**  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



**Date: November 20, 2025**

**Contact:** Greta Johnson  
Director of Communications & Assistant Chief of Staff  
Office of Executive Shapiro  
[ExecutivePress@summitoh.net](mailto:ExecutivePress@summitoh.net)  
330-643-2510

## **Summit County Enhances Public Health Monitoring to Strengthen Overdose Prevention Efforts**

*Opiate Abatement Funds Support Partnership with Biobot Analytics*

**SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO**—Summit County is proud to announce a new initiative to enhance local efforts to prevent overdoses and promote community well-being. The project is being led by Summit County in partnership with Summit County Public Health (SCPH), which is working with Biobot Analytics to incorporate wastewater monitoring into the county's broader public health surveillance efforts. Funded through the County's opiate abatement settlement, this initiative will provide valuable insight into community substance use trends to support data-driven prevention and response strategies.

"This effort reflects our commitment to using every resource available to protect the health and safety of Summit County residents," said Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro. "Through the use of opiate abatement funds, we're able to invest in innovative approaches like this using data and collaboration to strengthen prevention and support our community's recovery."

Wastewater samples are currently being collected weekly from the Akron Water Reclamation Facility. The data will complement other public health information already used by SCPH and its partners including first responders, hospitals, and community-based organizations. Together, these data sources help guide coordinated efforts to reduce overdoses and strengthen access to prevention and recovery supports. SCPH expects the new wastewater data to be integrated into the existing reporting structure by the end of December.

"By investing opiate abatement funds in wastewater-based monitoring, we can better understand when substance use trends are shifting," said Christopher Barker, Health Commissioner at Summit County Public Health. "That insight helps our partners respond more quickly, timing outreach, naloxone distribution, and treatment efforts when they're most needed."

Wastewater analysis is an emerging public health tool now used in more than 70 communities across the country with support from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). The method provides a reliable, anonymous view of population-level drug trends that can help local leaders make more informed decisions.

###