

NEWS RELEASE

Ilene Shapiro – Summit County Executive
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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Summit County law enforcement and community partners renew commitment to combatting elder abuse in partnership with Adult Protective Services

SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO — Earlier today, Summit County Department of Job and Family Services' Adult Protective Services Division hosted a signing of the Revised Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with local law enforcement officials and other community partners. The renewed MOU clarifies the referral process for suspected elderly abuse, neglect, or exploitation to the public, confidential hotline at 330-643-7217 operated by Adult Protective Services 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The MOU was first signed in 2015 with the purpose of delineating the roles and responsibilities for prevention, reporting, investigation, and prosecution in cases of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of adults aged 60 or older.

The agreement is a commitment between Adult Protective Services, all law enforcement agencies in the county, and several public agencies that are closely involved in the process of reporting, investigating, and prosecuting cases involving the elderly, including Summit County Public Health, Summit County Prosecutor's Office, Summit County Probate Court, and Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority, among many others.

"Protecting older adults requires strong partnerships and a coordinated response," said County Executive Ilene Shapiro. "Today's renewed agreement sends a clear message that Summit County's dedicated network of professionals is ready to intervene and pursue justice when necessary. Because every older adult in Summit County deserves to live with safety, dignity, and respect."

Following the signing event, the Adult Protective Services team hosted a 2-hour training course for law enforcement and first responders. Topics included a rundown on how their cases work, how to make a referral, what happens after you call the hotline, and how they keep people safe.

The Summit County Prosecutor's Office presented information regarding their partnership, assigning a dedicated Assistant Prosecutor to elder abuse cases where there are criminal elements such as theft and exploitation. Assistant Prosecutor Ariana Zimcosky shed light on this process and best practices for law enforcement and first responders.

Teri Ruslander, Elder Services Coordinator for Grove City Police Department, provided resources on best practices for successfully prosecuting elder abuse cases, learning interdisciplinary language for better communication during cases, and more helpful information from decades in the field.

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