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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TOWN HALL MEETINGS TO ADDRESS STARK COUNTY'S OPIATE EPIDEMIC
*Public invited to hear from local law enforcement, families and clinical professionals
on how to take action May 12, 14, 28 and June 15*

Stark County, OH (May 5, 2015) – The Mental Health and Recovery Services Board of Stark County and the Stop Heroin From Killing committee will host four town hall meetings titled “Stop Heroin from Killing: You Can Take Action” on May 12, 14, 28 and June 15. The town hall meetings are designed to share heroin/opiate prevention and recovery resources and tips, to dispel stigma and to empower Stark County residents to be proactive in the fight against heroin and opiate addiction. Presentations will be facilitated by the Honorable Frank G. Forchione.

Town hall meetings will be May 12 at Massillon Lincoln Theatre (156 Lincoln Way E., Massillon), May 14 at Lake High School (1025 Lake Center St. NW, Uniontown), May 28 at the Minerva Community Building (123 Brock Ave., Minerva), and June 15 at the Aultman Hospital Morrow Building (2600 6th St. SW, Canton). The public is invited to attend these special education events and to hear from local law enforcement, recovering families and clinical professionals from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

“We have identified the problem that exists today with heroin use,” said Fran Gerbig, Health and Wellness Manager of the Mental Health and Recovery Services Board of Stark County, “these programs will offer specific ways that family and community members can respond to and help those dealing with opiate addiction.”

Speakers will include Judge Forchione on Stark County’s latest opiate statistics, Stark County Sheriff George Maier on the use of law enforcement in heroin cases and SOLACE of Stark County on how families can respond to and care for loved ones addicted to heroin. In addition, the town hall meetings will feature several Q&A segments. Stark County residents can learn more at OpiatePrevention.org.

A highly addictive opioid drug, heroin use has been steadily rising nationally, statewide and in Stark County. In 2014, the number of people seeking opiate treatment since 2006 has increased more than 200% in Stark County. Southern Stark has shown as much as a 583% increase in people seeking help. The Mental Health and Recovery Services Board is tracking this upswing and working with local service providers, safety forces and area stakeholders to educate the community about the destructive effects and costly medical consequences of heroin use.

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About Mental Health and Recovery Services Board of Stark County

Mental Health and Recovery Services Board of Stark County is a multi-faceted organization of expert professionals, dedicated volunteers and concerned community leaders close to mental health and addiction needs right here at home. MHR SB is responsible for planning, funding and monitoring public mental health and addiction prevention, early intervention and treatment services delivered to the residents of Stark County. It is one of 53 Boards coordinating the public behavioral health system across Ohio. The Board also advocates for residents with behavioral health issues at both the local and state levels and provides educational opportunities for local providers and other community stakeholders. For more online about the work of the Board, visit www.starkmhrrsb.org.