

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jamie Luster, HCS Ohio Communications Director

jamie.luster@osumc.edu

(419) 699-6320

December 13, 2022

National Institute on Drug Abuse researchers to meet with Jefferson County leaders

Jefferson County, OH – Leading researchers in the fight to combat the opioid crisis will meet with Jefferson County leaders on Wednesday to discuss local initiatives to reduce drug overdoses.

Drs. Redonna Chandler and Jennifer Villani, Director and Associate Director of the HEALing Communities Study at the National Institute on Drug Abuse, are visiting the Jefferson County Prevention & Recovery Board. They will meet with several local champions of the study that aims to reduce opioid overdose deaths, including Andrew Henry, Jefferson County Health Commissioner, and Bill Holt, Executive Director of the Prevention & Recovery Board.

The HEALing Communities Study's goal is to significantly reduce opioid-related overdose deaths and increase distribution of naloxone, access and utilization of medication for opioid use disorder, and increase safer prescribing of opioids. Jefferson County is part of the HEALing Communities Study, along with 17 other counties in Ohio, and communities in Kentucky, New York, and Massachusetts. The HEALing Communities Study is supported by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, part of the National Institutes of Health and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration as part of the NIH's Helping to End Addiction Long-term (HEAL) initiative. Funding for each county taking part in Ohio will be used to engage community members in developing a data-driven approach to implement evidence-based practices. In addition, health communications campaigns aiming to increase naloxone awareness and reduce stigma associated with medications for opioid use disorder will be conducted.

"Our collaboration with NIDA, RecoveryOhio and Jefferson County through the HEALing Communities Study has the potential to change the response to the opioid crisis by saving lives and moving individuals towards recovery. The effects of this work in Jefferson County on individuals and communities in Ohio and beyond cannot be understated," says Dr. Bridget Freisthler, Co-Principal Investigator of the HEALing Communities Study in Ohio, who will also be present at Wednesday's meeting.

Drs. Chandler, Villani, Freisthler, and all local HEALing Communities Study champions and staff will be available for questions and comments on Wednesday, December 14th from 11:00 AM-11:15 AM in the board room at the Jefferson County Prevention & Recovery Board, 524 Madison Avenue in Steubenville.

Learn more at www.HealTogetherOH.org/Jefferson

###