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Attorney General DeWine Announces \$2.6 Million in Grants to Create Trauma Recovery Centers

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)— Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine announced today that he is awarding more than \$2.6 million in grants to create five Trauma Recovery Centers in Ohio that will provide crisis intervention to hospitalized traumatic violent crime victims.

Ohio will be just the second state in the nation with a network of Trauma Recovery Centers.

Attorney General DeWine made the announcement today at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center, which is among the grant recipients.

"These Trauma Recovery Centers will fill a gap in connecting victims of crime to services, especially those within underserved, vulnerable populations that may face barriers in accessing or may not know how to access victim services," said Attorney General DeWine. "This program will ensure that victims will not have to seek out support on their own, because help will immediately be brought to them."

The Trauma Recovery Centers (TRCs) will each operate in partnership between five victim service providers and five hospitals throughout the state. TRC trauma counselors will provide immediate mental health support and advocacy to hospitalized patients who are the victims of traumatic violent crimes such as gunshot and stab wounds, gang violence, physical attacks, sexual assault, human trafficking, domestic violence, and hate crimes.

"A hospital's primary focus should always be a patient's physical well-being, but victims of violent crime suffer in other ways. Through this effort, victims admitted to these hospitals will receive immediate access to mental health services in order to help them cope during their hospitalization and after they return home," said Attorney General DeWine.

The partnerships receiving grant awards to create TRCs in Ohio are:

- The Ohio State University STAR Program and The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center: \$839,335
- Circle Health Service and University Hospitals (Cleveland): \$993,424
- May Dugan Center and MetroHealth (Cleveland): \$545,363
- Seven Hills Neighborhood Houses and Cincinnati Children's Hospital: \$125,685
- CitiLookout and Springfield Regional Medical Center: \$171,963

"As a Level I Trauma Center, the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center recognizes the need for compassionate, comprehensive care for our patients. With today's designation as a Trauma Recovery Center, our STAR Program will expand upon its mission of facilitating healing and recovery for survivors of violence and loss. We thank Attorney General DeWine for his recognition of our leadership in trauma recovery and in designating the Wexner Medical Center and its STAR Program as one of five Trauma Recover Centers in Ohio," said Sheldon Retchin, M.D., CEO, OSU Wexner Medical Center.

TRC advocates will provide patients with trauma counseling and assistance with any other immediate needs such as food, clothing, and housing. An advocate will also help victims apply for victim compensation and will, if needed, arrange for victims to receive more specialized assistance, such as substance abuse treatment, sexual assault or domestic violence services, legal advocacy, or spiritual guidance.

After patients are released from the hospital, TRC counselors will continue to advocate on the behalf of the victims to ensure that they maintain access to critical victim services. Because getting to and from counseling can often be a barrier to treatment, advocates can also arrange for any needed transportation.

Ohio's program is modeled on California's network of TRCs, launched by the University of California at San Francisco (UCSF) and UCSF Medical Center. The San Francisco program reports that 74 percent of patients showed an improvement in overall mental health. There was also a 65 percent increase in sexual assault survivors who received follow-up treatment and a 56 percent increase in victims returning to employment.

"Ohio joins a growing list of states recognizing the impact of unaddressed trauma and the importance of providing trauma recovery services to stop the cycle of crime," said Lenore Anderson, president of the Alliance for Safety and Justice, which provided assistance in developing Ohio's TRC network. "The Alliance for Safety and Justice was honored to work with Attorney General DeWine to ensure that the communities most in need of these services will now receive them. Eight in ten crime victims experience at least one symptom of trauma and too many do not receive the support they need from the criminal justice system. Today, Ohio took an important step to fix that."

"Over the past eight years, the Ohio State STAR Program has provided much needed psychological support for those in our community who have suffered from overwhelming trauma, violence and loss. Psychological interventions in the immediate aftermath of a traumatic incident may help reduce the impact and severity of post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms. This grant will greatly enhance the services we are able to offer patients and will be critical in strengthening our relationships with community-based providers so that those who have experienced trauma will have the best possible continuum of care and recovery," said Ken Yeager, Ph.D., STAR Program Clinical Director, OSU Wexner Medical Center.

The \$2,675,770 in Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grants are being awarded as part of the "Ohio Attorney General's Expanding Services and Empowering Victims Initiative," which was created in 2015 to determine how VOCA funds, which come from federal settlements, fines, and fees, could best be spent to serve victims of crime in Ohio.

Grants for additional TRCs throughout the state could be awarded in the future.