



The Challenge of Protecting Children During the Opioid Epidemic

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CHAIR, BOARD OF TRUSTEES



*Julie Barnes, M.Ed., LSW
Executive Director*

Summit County Children Services (SCCS) found itself in the middle of a crisis ... one created by substance abuse and the opioid epidemic that exploded in 2016. The effects of opiates and other drugs on children and families have had a tremendous impact on SCCS ... socially, emotionally and financially. Over the last two years, SCCS has seen a drastic increase in the number of referrals where substance abuse was involved ... a 17% increase in the number of children who entered custody ... and an 18% increase in the cost of placing and caring for the children affected by substance abuse. This has also caused an urgent need for more foster and adoptive homes. At the same time, the State of Ohio ranked 50th in the amount of financial support directed to public agencies that serve neglected and abused children. Even if Ohio doubled the funds allocated to state child protection, Ohio would still be the lowest in the nation. This has placed a huge financial burden on SCCS in meeting the needs of children and families and also on the casework staff who oftentimes are challenged with secondary trauma from serving addicted families.



*Anna M. Arvay, CPA
Chair, Board of Trustees*

To meet these ongoing needs, SCCS developed many collaborative partnerships throughout the community that have helped to establish and continue a multitude of services for families experiencing substance abuse and addiction, as well as for children who have been affected by trauma. We have seen many families overcome addiction with the right intervention and support, and this annual report highlights some of the services provided to families.

However, now more than ever, we need your support for the children of Summit County, by contacting the governor, your state representatives, and state senators and asking for their support for child protection services. Children are the silent victims of the opioid epidemic. As a community, we have to meet this challenge head on because every child deserves a safe and stable environment.

The Substance Abuse Problem

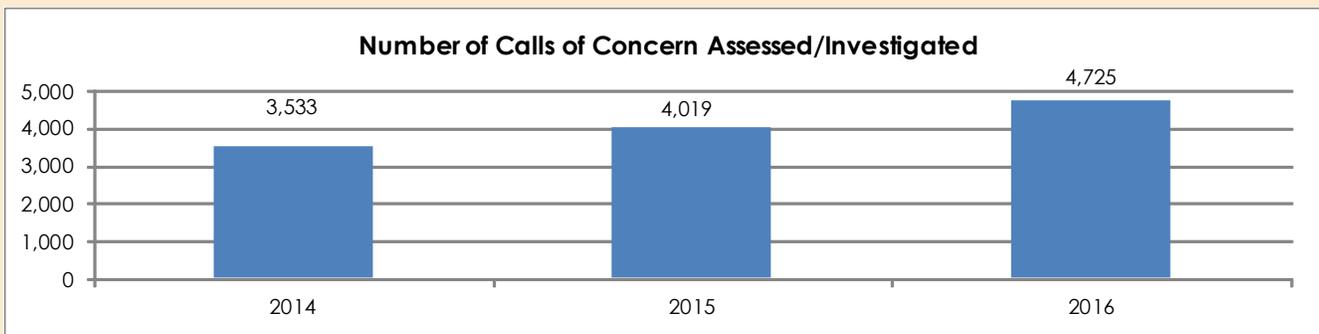
The effects of opiates and other drugs on children and families have had a tremendous impact on SCCS ... socially, emotionally and financially. These types of cases present family dynamics that are more complex due to the impact of traumatic life experiences. Children are requiring higher levels of care and more services to address both physical and behavioral health needs. They also stay in care longer as their parents work towards recovery, which can be a slow and lengthy process.

Nearly 70% of all families served by SCCS are challenged by substance abuse and addiction. In fact, half of the children who entered foster care in 2016 came from families where at least one

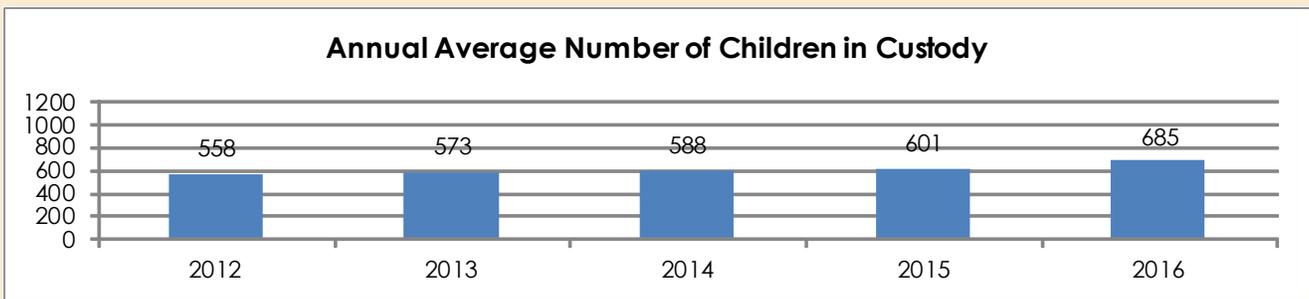
parent struggled with substance abuse. And, one in four of these children came from homes where an opiate was the primary substance. In the last two years, SCCS saw a 34% increase in the number of calls of abuse/neglect received by the agency. And since 2014, the number of cases open for ongoing services increased by 20%, and the number of children in custody increased by 17%.

As a result of the explosion of substance abuse involved cases, especially from the recent opioid epidemic, the increased number of children who entered custody has had a dramatic impact on the agency's operating budget. In the last two years, the cost of placing and caring for children increased by 18%.

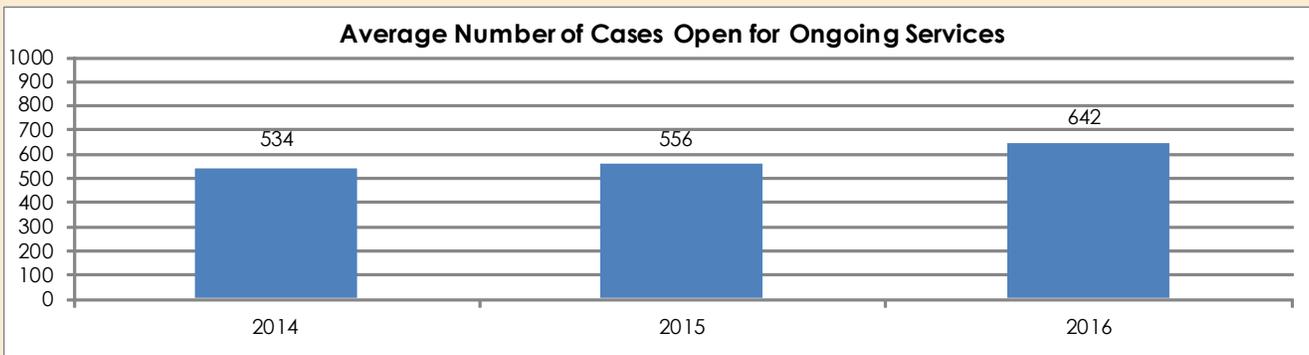
IMPACT OF OPIATES AND OTHER DRUGS ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVED



The number of calls of concern assessed/investigated by SCCS increased by 34% between 2014 and 2016.



The number of children in the custody of SCCS has increased 23% since 2012, and 17% from 2014 to 2016.



The average number of cases open for ongoing services has increased by 20% between 2014 and 2016.

Summit County Children Services' Response

Family Reunification through Recovery Court (FRRC, through Summit County Juvenile Court) – SCCS actively partnered in this specialized family drug court to assist parents with their recovery and sobriety efforts in order to create a healthy, stable home environment that allows the family to permanently reunify with their children. Individualized recovery plans were developed for qualified participants based on their strengths and individual needs that also included access to a wide range of treatment and rehabilitation services.

The STARS Program (*Summit County Collaborative on Trauma, Alcohol & Other Drug & Resiliency Building Services for Children & Families*) – SCCS continued to spearhead this multi-system collaboration that provides intensive trauma and treatment services to eligible families. With support from various community partners, services provided include in-home alcohol and other drug assessments, assigned Recovery Coaches, ongoing substance abuse treatment, the Nurturing Parenting Program, trauma screening and services, tutoring and mentoring for children. In 2016, 113 families were enrolled in the STARS Program.



Mike and Diana Fabre successfully completed both FRRC and the STARS Program in order to regain custody of their daughter.

"It was just nice to have people to talk to ... people always voiced their opinions and you were able to hear those opinions." ... Mike Fabre commenting about FRRC

The Importance of Recovery Coaches

The STARS program provides Recovery Coaches to STARS and FRRC participants as a support to those progressing through their recovery journey. Recovery Coaches are also in recovery and many have had past involvement with child welfare. Local agencies provide the Recovery Coaches and



Jill, a Recovery Coach



Tamara, a Recovery Coach

they are matched with a program participant based on background characteristics. Recovery Coaches are examples of sober living and have provided additional resources and guidance to recovery. Recovery Coaches serve an important role ... they help to remove barriers to recovery, engage parents in their treatment and provide ongoing support. These individuals are trained to serve as peer support for those in or seeking recovery.

Summit County Public Health: Summit County Public Health is one of several key Community Collaborative Partners with the STARS Program. Deonna Dirham, STARS AOD (Alcohol and Other Drugs) Assessor, provides rapid in-home assessments for early identification of parental substance abuse issues. Having an in-home assessor has removed the barrier of transportation and has increased the rate of substance abuse service needs. Christa Brunelle, STARS Outreach Specialist, meets the participants "where they are at" and provides assistance with wrap-around services and linkages to resources and treatment. Mary Martell, STARS Program Coordinator, matches Recovery Coaches with participants and coordinates the Nurturing Parenting Program for families.



Pictured (from left): Christa Brunelle, STARS Outreach Specialist; Deonna Dirham, STARS AOD Assessor; and Mary Martell, STARS Program Coordinator.

Annual Recovery Walk

Several community partners along with SCCS sponsored the Annual Recovery Walk held as part of National Recovery Month in September. This walk helped to raise awareness about the need to advocate for treatment services and to support those individuals who are in recovery. The route included a stop by Dr. Bob's house, the founder of Alcoholics Anonymous. More than 150 people participated.





(330) 379-9094 | Hearing Impaired: Ohio Relay Service 7-1-1 | summitkids.org
 24-Hour Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline: (330) 434-KIDS (5437)

Summit County Children Services provides a wide range of high-quality services to help build families and build futures. The Division of Social Services includes:

Intake Services

Calls of concern are made to the **24-Hour Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline** involving the safety and well-being of children. Accepted reports of child abuse and neglect are initially assessed and assigned to one of two pathways: Traditional Response or Alternative Response. Both pathways allow staff to address the unique safety concerns, risks and situations of each family in a way that is collaborative and respectful, with child safety being the primary goal. With **Alternative Response**, Intake caseworkers focus on the needs of the family and on rapid implementation of services and supports. Also within Intake Services is the **Serious Trauma Assessment Team (STAT) Unit** which was developed to identify a specialized team of caseworkers to handle serious trauma cases, human trafficking and abuse/neglect in out-of-home settings. This unit has specialized training in forensic interviewing for child sexual abuse, abusive head trauma, shaken baby, and other forms of child maltreatment.

Protective Services

Caseworkers provide supportive counseling to children and families to strengthen family supports and maintain children safely in their own homes. Also within Protective Services are the following specialized units and programs: **Medically Fragile Unit, Substance Intervention Unit, STARS Program, Family Meeting Unit, Family Interaction Center and Father Factor Program.**

Placement & Permanency Planning Services

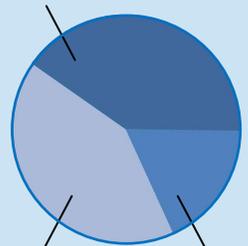
Caseworkers coordinate the placement of children in substitute care when they enter agency custody and seek permanency options when children become available for adoption. Services provided include: **Kinship Care, Foster Care, Adoption, Independent Living and Transitional Housing Services.**

2016 by the Numbers

Total Intake Calls:
12,366

Assigned for Service: 5,009

This total includes:
 Traditional Investigations: 3,248
 Alternative Response (AR): 1,242
 Serious Trauma Assessment Team (STAT Unit): 519



Screened Out: 5,138
(calls that do not meet the legal definition of child abuse or neglect)

Information & Referral Calls: 2,219

- 685 children in custody *(avg. each month)*
- 689 cases open *(avg. each month)*
- 54 adoptions finalized
- Average age of children served is 8 years
- 76.2% of children reunified with family

2016 Summary of Financial Statements

Beginning Fund Balance *(January 1, 2016)* \$28,472,846

REVENUES

Operating Levy (Net)	\$25,223,957
Federal Funds	\$15,501,931
State Funds	\$ 3,268,824
Local & Other Funds	\$ 71,664
Total Revenues	\$44,066,376

EXPENDITURES

Employee Salaries	\$19,372,150
Employee Fringe Benefits	\$ 7,918,371
Placement Care	\$15,768,120
Clothing, Food & Transportation	\$ 686,166
Health-Related Expenses for Children	\$ 360,842
Building, Supplies & Contracted Services	\$ 2,457,153
Community Education & Staff Training	\$ 170,884
Grant-Specific Expenses	\$ 1,188,264
Other Expenses	\$ 339,400
Total Expenditures	\$48,261,350
Excess of Expenditures over Revenue	(\$ 4,194,974)

***Ending Fund Balance *(December 31, 2016)* \$24,277,872**

The primary funding source for Summit County Children Services is a 2.25 mill six-year property tax levy approved by voters in 2007 and renewed in 2012. The levy generated \$25 million in 2015, representing over half (57%) of the Total Revenues. The remaining 43% of revenues came primarily from Federal and State funding sources in support of the Agency's social services programs and operations.

Agency Mission

SCCS is committed to the safety, permanency and well-being of all children served, in partnership with families and the community.

Agency Leadership (as of 1/23/2017)

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Julie Barnes, M.Ed., LSW

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- Michele Mizda**, Akron Children's Hospital

Women's Auxiliary Board

Jen Thames, President

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