County of Summit, along with Eleven Community Partners, Create New Program, Circle of Care, to Serve Elders Who are Subject to Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation.

The Summit County Department of Job and Family Services (SCDJFS), along with eleven other community agencies signed a Plan of Cooperation agreement, which will officially create the community partnership that will work together to establish collaborative strategies to serve elders who are subject to abuse, neglect and/or exploitation.

Participating in this collaboration is Summit County Public Health, Summit County Sheriff, Summit County Prosecutor, Summit County Probate Court, Summit County Medical Examiner, City of Akron on behalf of the Akron Police Department and the Akron Fire Department, Alcohol, Drug Addiction & Mental Health Services Board, Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority, Summit County Developmental Disabilities Board and Direction Home Akron Canton Area Agency on Aging and Disabilities.

As a result of this collaboration, Circle of Care, a new program designed for seniors has been created. This Circle of Care will improve each member's response to the needs of seniors and stop duplication of service, increasing positive outcomes.

In June, 2014 Ohio law established an Adult Protective Services (APS) Workgroup to identify programmatic and financial gaps in the APS system. The APS Workgroup reviewed a collection of county-based APS programs that varied in capability and procedures. The consensus of the Workgroup was that any approach to APS reform should be comprehensive, multidisciplinary and accountable to the consumers of APS services and Summit County citizens.

-more-
The APS Workgroup recommended a number of actions, one of which involves community planning that require the Department of Job & Family Services to establish a county Plan of Cooperation with its community partners. The Plan of Cooperation is a formal agreement requiring the partners to work together to establish the collaborative strategies to serve seniors who are subject to abuse, neglect and/or exploitation. The Plan will be utilized as a foundational platform for participating agencies/departments to develop procedures for integrating and coordinating services and sharing information in the interest of providing adult protective services.

“The signing of this Plan of Cooperation creating a “Circle of Care” for our seniors is a momentous and exciting time for Summit County,” County Executive Russ Pry stated. “This type of community planning heightens the public and professional awareness and commitment to our senior services and works to assure our seniors remain safe and secure.”

The first item of business for the collaboration is for each member agency/department to develop a Memorandum of Understanding that will define the responsibilities and relationships among the local participants involved in the prevention, reporting, investigation, treatment and prosecution of cases of elder abuse and neglect.

Other actions recommended by the Workgroup, which will be developed under the direction of the collaboration, are a Comprehensive Plan and the establishment of an Inter-Disciplinary Team. The Comprehensive Plan will outline the collaborative strategies for building system capacity along with the procedures to monitor progress and quality assurance. The Inter-disciplinary Team will include professionals from diverse disciplines who will work together to review cases of elder abuse, neglect and/or exploitation, address systemic problems, collaborate and coordinate to provide services.

Pat Divoky, SCDJFS Director stated, “I am looking forward to the increased coordination of effort this collaboration will bring to serving our senior population.”

For a free copy of the new Circle of Care information book, please call Darlene Mims, Assistant Deputy Director of Special Projects for Summit County Job and Family Services at 330-643-7251.
Summit County Executive Russ Pry.

-end-