**Community Action Announces Pathways to Recovery Program**
For much of the past century, scientist studying substance misuse labored in the shadows of powerful myths and misconceptions about the nature of addiction. When scientist began to study addictive behavior in the 1930’s, people suffering from addictions were thought to be morally flawed and lacking in willpower. Those views shaped society’s responses to substance misuse, treating it as a moral failing rather than a health problem, which led to an emphasis on punishment rather than prevention and treatment. Today, thanks to science, our views and our responses to addiction and other substance use disorders have changed dramatically. Groundbreaking discoveries about the brain have revolutionized our understanding of compulsive substance use, enabling us to respond effectively to the problem.

We know that addiction is a disease that affects both the brain and behavior. We have identified many of the biological and environmental factors and are beginning to search for the genetic variations that contribute to the development and progression of the disease. Scientists use this knowledge to develop effective prevention and treatment approaches that reduce the toll substance use takes on individuals, families and communities.

With this understanding, the Faith in Recovery Coalition was formed in 2014 with the mission to combat substance abuse in Fayette County through collaborative community development project to promote a safer, healthier community. Projects created through this collaborative include the Drug Free Communities Program, Recovery Housing, and the Rural Health Opioid Program.

Funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration, Fayette County will launch this program on March 6, 2019, under the project name Pathways to Recovery. This program is based upon the philosophy that there are multiple pathways to recovery, people can and do recover, and that peer support and care coordination are essential to preventing the senseless number of lives we have lost in the past few years. The program will operate from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. 7 days a week. Our Peer Recovery Specialists will respond with other emergency service personnel to overdoses and other community referrals. They will pass out hope packets, offering individuals connections to treatment, applications for medical benefits, and other essential services.

The program will not stop there. They will follow the individual as they transfer to or from programs and/or incarceration. These are times when they are most vulnerable to overdose deaths. They will continue to connect them to community resources (Medicaid, SNAP benefits) and employment when appropriate. They will also connect them to transportation either through grant funding through Fayette County Transportation or through the Volunteer Driver Program.

The Peer Recovery Specialists will also work with family members to provide education on self-care, supporting their loved ones during treatment and setting up emotional supports and boundaries.

To become a volunteer driver for the program, contact Mekia Rhoades at 740-335-9628.

To refer an individual in need of services, contact Shane Anderson at 740-463-1009.

(The Pathways to Recovery Program is a collaborative project of the Faith in Recovery Coalition. Program partners include: Community Action, Fayette Memorial Hospital and the EMS, Fayette County Health Department, Fayette Recovery, Scioto Paint Valley Mental Health, City of Washington Court House, Fayette County Commissioners, Resurrection Recovery, and the Paint Valley ADAMH Board).

Pathways to Recovery is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration’s Rural Health Opioid Program