

LOCAL & STATE

CLOSER LOOK

Need for mental health help more pronounced than ever

By Scott Rasmus

Butler County Mental Health and Addiction Recovery Services Board

With May being Mental Health Month, I want to revisit a research article



Scott Rasmus regarding the prevalence of mental illness.

Many of us have heard that one out of five Americans, 20% of the population, experience mental illness in any given year, which would be the same percentage for Ohioans and Butler County residents. My research at that time included a large number of sources such as the American Psychological Association (APA), the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI) that

indicated this percent is probably a little bit higher than 20%, being about 22.5%, which would be between one out of five and one out of four (25%) people on average.

It is important to take into account the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges we all have endured over the last three years. Reliable sources such as an APA survey last spring provided evidence this one-year prevalence number could be even higher, maybe more toward one out of 4 (25%) of our population, especially for our youth and those experiencing substance abuse and dependence.

With Butler County's current population around 400,000, this would mean 100,000 in any given year experience some degree of mental illness, especially the most common disorders in community mental health. These typically include anxiety, depression and substance mis-

use. These numbers do not include the county residents who experience subclinical symptoms that do not meet the level of an illness or a disorder in these areas but still feel a discomfort with their current quality of life.

My research back then indicated that fewer than 50% of those who experience mental illness seek help, often due to lack of awareness, education and/or concern about experiencing the stigma associated with seeking help for a mental illness. This sub-50% number can be extended to those who are subclinical with their symptoms with even fewer likely seeking help in this group.

This discussion reminds me of watching a recent episode of the Dr. Phil (McGraw) show, the well-known television psychologist, when he stated that you cannot have physical health without mental health. The important conclusion here is the

need for mental health improvement may be greater than at any point in our lives, so please reach out if you need help.

For those in Butler County seeking help for mental health and substance abuse issues, call or text the Crisis Hotline and Heroin Hopeline at 844-4CRISIS (844-427-4747). This 24/7/365 line is not only a behavioral health crisis line for Butler County but has a general "Information and Referral" service component with resources for any caller including referrals to prevention, education and treatment agencies in the local community mental health and addiction system.

Providers are listed online as well, at bcmhars.org (click "services" then "providers list").

Dr. Scott Rasmus is the executive director of the Butler County Mental Health and Addiction Recovery Services Board.

IN-DEPTH COVERAGE

Car theft victims pay the price at Cleveland's impound lot

By Molly Walsh

Advance Ohio Media

CLEVELAND — Malissa Paletta says she was victimized twice in the theft of her Kia earlier this month: Her car suffered extensive damage, and Cleveland forced her to pay an unexpected bill.

The Kia Boyz, a gang of car thieves, made off with Paletta's 2016 Kia from in front of her apartment in the city's Clark-Fulton neighborhood, she said. And once the vehicle was found and towed, she had to pay impound fees.

"I am a victim. Why do I have to pay this?" Paletta said. "I was just made into a victim again."

The spike in Kia and Hyundai thefts, brought on by a social media craze that detailed how to steal the imports, has inadvertently boosted Cleveland's coffers at a time when it says, in a federal lawsuit, that it "has suffered economic damages" because of the thefts.

law director from 2002 to 2005. He said he believes it is wrong for Cleveland to charge such fees.

"It's certainly unfair," Chandra said. "It's bad public policy for a victim to have to pay for the fees. It's one thing to have to pay a storage fee if your car breaks down, you are arrested, or your car is towed because you parked illegally. It's another if you are a crime victim."

Cleveland.com and The Plain Dealer reached out to a city spokeswoman for comment on the issue.

Paletta learned of her car's theft through a neighbor, who woke her up around midnight May 6 to check whether she was home. A Ring surveillance camera captured a thief driving the 27-year-old's 2016 Kia Soul away from her apartment.

"I went outside and saw shattered glass where my car was and just got stressed," she said.

Less than a week later,