



CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF CRISIS INTERVENTION TEAM PROGRAMS IN OHIO

Wednesday, October 29, 2025
6 - 9 P.M. | Hilton Polaris Columbus



**CRIMINAL JUSTICE
COORDINATING CENTER
of EXCELLENCE**
A NEOMED CCoE



Northeast Ohio
MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

ABOUT OHIO CIT

Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT) are community-based programs that bring together law enforcement, mental health professionals, advocates, people living with mental illness and their families, and other partners to improve community responses to people experiencing mental health crises.

The 25 Years of Ohio Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Celebration Dinner honors and recognizes the impact that CIT programs have had for more than two decades in the state. Ohio Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) programs are community partnership programs essential to the health and well-being of vulnerable individuals with mental illness and related disorders. People experiencing mental health crises receive a safe and effective response and are connected to the treatment and support they need rather than unnecessarily being arrested and/or incarcerated or left to languish without needed intervention. Ohio CIT programs have provided evidence-based and trauma informed training to law enforcement and other first responders from all 88 counties. Since 2000, over 2,100 CIT training courses for patrol officers and other identified partners have been conducted, resulting in over 28,000 individuals receiving this vital training.

But CIT is more than just training: It is the collaboration between law enforcement, first responders, mental health providers, advocates, justice systems, and other community partners. These systems work together to create trust and effective communication between community partners for better outcomes for crisis situations. Unique to Ohio, CIT coordination is organized by the mental health board catchment areas to provide structure and partnerships at the local level. Ohio CIT program Steering and Advisory Committees bring together these community partners to critically assess and enhance their crisis response systems, streamline crisis referrals, and learn from incidents and experiences. As active participants in CIT programs, individuals and family members with lived experience of mental illness crises are elevated as key informants and advocates within their own communities for improved care.

In 1998, the Ohio Department of Mental Health (now Ohio Department of Behavioral Health) saw CIT as a promising endeavor and invited Sam Cochran and Randy DuPont from Memphis to present at the Annual Forensic Conference. Following their presentation, Summit and Lucas Counties were early adopters in 2000, with Summit County holding the first Ohio CIT training course. In 2001, Summit County began inviting teams from other counties to observe the CIT training and learn about the program, resulting in broad interest. This led to the decision by the Ohio Department of Mental Health to fund the Summit County ADM Board to

ABOUT OHIO CIT (CONTINUED)

develop a Criminal Justice Coordinating Center of Excellence. Established in 2001, the Criminal Justice Coordinating Center of Excellence (CJ CCoE), housed within the Department of Psychiatry at Northeast Ohio Medical University, was created to promote CIT and other jail diversion alternatives for people with mental illness throughout Ohio. The overrepresentation of people with mental illness in the criminal justice system is a complex problem that requires complex solutions and committed partners.

Two committed partners emerged early on: NAMI Ohio was enthusiastic about spreading CIT throughout Ohio and decided to collaborate with the work of the CJ CCoE. NAMI Ohio and the CJ CCoE have co-led CIT dissemination in Ohio for over two decades. The Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services and Ohio Department of Behavioral Health have provided ongoing support to both entities in this effort. At this same time, Ret. Justice Evelyn Stratton formed the Advisory Committee on Mental Illness and the Courts (ACMIC), which upon her retirement from the Ohio Supreme Court in 2012 transitioned to become the Ohio Attorney General's Office Task Force on Criminal Justice and Mental Illness.

Central to its mission, the CJ CCoE, in partnership with NAMI Ohio and law enforcement liaisons, serves as the consultation and technical assistance hub for Ohio CIT programs. In tandem with a steering committee of CIT Coordinators, this group hosts the Annual Ohio CIT Conference and Ohio CIT Awards, highlighting and elevating the hard work and dedication of CIT trained individuals and CIT program coordinators to improve their communities.

The Ohio CIT Core Elements, first authored in 2004 and updated in 2022, provide guidance and structure to establish, develop, enhance, and sustain CIT programs. The Ohio CIT Peer Review Process is a voluntary and collegial process built on a quality improvement approach to strengthen our collective understanding of the core elements and best practices within CIT programs. The Peer Review process is built on a continuous learning approach that allows communities interested in improving their program, a process to receive specific feedback on their implementation and adherence to the CIT core elements; allows peer reviewers to also learn ways to strengthen their CIT programs; and better positions the CCoE and NAMI Ohio to provide ongoing technical assistance and guidance based on exemplary practices and lessons learned from Ohio's CIT programs.

OHIO
CIT



GOALS OF THE OHIO CIT PROGRAMS

Improve the safety of everyone in situations when law enforcement officers interact with persons in crisis.

Improve outcomes when law enforcement officers interact with persons in crisis.

Increase understanding of, accessibility to, and improve responsiveness by the local crisis response system.
Divert persons in crisis from the criminal justice system to treatment alternatives when possible.

Transform the local crisis response system to use law enforcement officers as first responders only when there is an immediate or imminent threat to safety or a serious criminal concern.



Evening's Activities

5:00pm – 6:00pm

Hors d'oeuvres and Mocktails Hour

6:00pm – 7:00pm

Dinner Service

Emcees:

Dr. Doug Smith

Robert Kasprzak

Celebration Speakers:

6:00pm

Reading of the Governor's CIT Proclamation – Luke Russell

Governor Mike DeWine (taped remarks)

Invocation: Chaplain Will Hartfelder

Attorney General Dave Yost

7:00pm

Major Sam Cochran (ret.)

Dr. Mark Munetz

Dr. Randy Dupont (taped remarks)

Ret. Justice Evelyn Stratton

Ruth Simera & Luke Russell

9:00pm

Evening Closes

AGENDA

DR. DOUG SMITH
MEDICAL DIRECTOR/CCO
COUNTY OF SUMMIT ADM BOARD
PROFESSOR OF PSYCHIATRY, NEOMED



ROBERT KASPRZAK
SENIOR MANAGER OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH
FOR THE MENTAL HEALTH & RECOVERY SERVICES
BOARD OF LUCAS COUNTY AND PAST CIT
COORDINATOR



LUKE RUSSELL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
NAMI OHIO



GOVERNOR MIKE DEWINE
STATE OF OHIO



SPEAKERS

SPEAKERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL DAVE YOST
STATE OF OHIO



MAJOR SAM COCHRAN
RETIRED
CIT INTERNATIONAL BOARD CHAIRPERSON



SPEAKERS

DR. MARK MUNETZ
PROFESSOR AND CHAIR, EMERITUS
NORTHEAST OHIO MEDICAL UNIVERSITY



DR. RANDY DUPONT
PROFESSOR AND CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST
CIT INTERNATIONAL HONORARY CO-CHAIR



SPEAKERS

RET. JUSTICE EVELYN STRATTON
RETIRED, OHIO SUPREME COURT
PROGRAM DIRECTOR, STEPPING UP OHIO
CO-CHAIR, ATTORNEY GENERAL TASK FORCE
ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND MENTAL ILLNESS

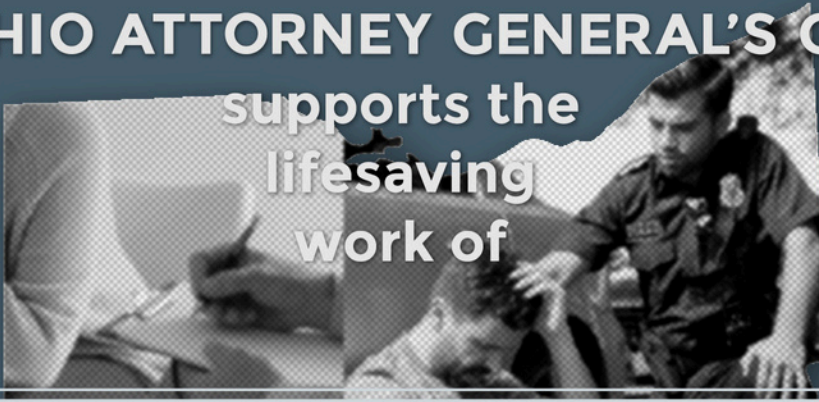


RUTH SIMERA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
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and Communities

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CONGRATULATIONS
on **25 years of success!**

NEOMED celebrates our CIT-trained officers and all first responders around the state for their commitment to the program.

PROUD SUPPORTERS OF THE OHIO CIT PROGRAM

Together, building safer and more compassionate communities.



25

Year Anniversary

SPONSORS



The Ohio State University Police Division (OSUPD)

Proud to have all OSUPD officers CIT trained.

Serving the Buckeye community by supporting physical and mental well-being.

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THANK YOU

Thank you for the generous support provided by these sponsors:

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Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation
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Emily Ribnik
Ron Ribnik
Ruth Simera
Stark County Mental Health & Addiction Recovery
Stepping Up Ohio
Strong Consulting, LLC
Zach Holzapfel

**Special thanks to NEOMED's
Department of Psychiatry for the table gifts!**

**A huge thank you to the planning
team for their work and preparation
for the celebration!**

Carole Ballard
Sara Coberly
Thom Craig
Chris Karakis
Jamie Messenger
Dr. Mark Munetz
Chris Nicastro
Breanna Pantzer
Adam Peacock
Dr. Em Ribnik
Theresa Richards
Luke Russell
Ret. Justice Evelyn Stratton
Ruth Simera
Dr. Doug Smith
Leslie Stoyer
Lucky Tisch
Max Warner
Lee Ann Watson

THANK YOU



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For more information on NEOMED CIT programs, visit [/www.neomed.edu/cjccoe/cit/](http://www.neomed.edu/cjccoe/cit/)