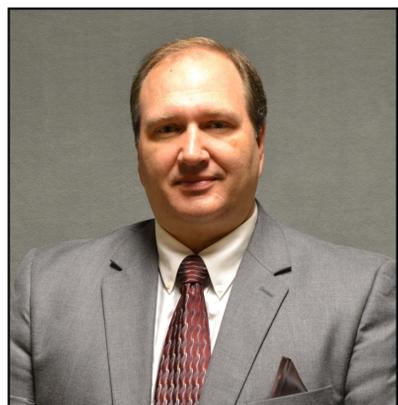


News from Portage Path Behavioral Health

## PORTAGE PATH WELCOMES NEW DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT



Portage Path Behavioral Health announces the hiring of Edwin “Eddie” Degg as Director of Development. A graduate of the University of Akron with a B.A. in biology and a J.D. in law, Degg comes to Portage Path after having spent past years developing support and infrastructure for area environmental and conservancy groups.

Degg’s primary focus will be to help the large community mental health center build relationships and raise money to support the nonprofit agency’s mission, which provides accessible, affordable counseling and psychiatry services to over 9,500 local residents, most of whom earn less than \$10,000 per year.

“I’ve always looked at the world as a place to make better,” says Degg. “Portage Path provides a service crucial to the health and safety of the Summit County community, the impact of which resonates into families and neighborhoods. Just about every day, I come into contact with a client who’s turned their life around. That’s pretty rewarding.”

While Portage Path has been serving the area for 46 years, the agency has not concentrated on development, instead focusing on being as efficient as possible with the funding it receives, much of which comes via Medicaid and the County ADM Board. With Ohio Medicaid rates for mental health, which have not increased in over 20 years, slated to be cut through the Behavioral Health Redesign initiative and the uncertainty surrounding Medicaid expansion, new sources of funding will be needed to maintain service levels.

“We have worked very diligently to be self-sustaining throughout the decades,” says Dr. Tracy Yaeger, President of Portage Path. “However, given the ever-changing environment in our field, it is essential that we become more active in fundraising and philanthropy. Eddie is a highly-skilled development professional who will grow our program and help us continue to be here for people in need.”

## OUR COMMUNITY NEEDS YOUR HELP MORE THAN EVER!

At any particular time, tens of thousands of Summit County residents are experiencing a serious mental illness such as Bipolar Disorder, Major Depressive Disorder, and Panic Disorder. At Portage Path, we treat over 6,000 people each year diagnosed with an disorder categorized as Serious Mental Illness (SMI) or Serious and Persistent Mental Illness (SPMI). People with these debilitating health issues routinely miss work, are not able to do their job as well as they once could, or just cannot work at all. The human toll these illnesses take on children, families and friends is impossible to calculate, and the economic costs of lost income exacerbate the situation and lead to added stress.

As if trying to manage life while struggling with mental illness weren’t enough, having SMI or SPMI likely means a young death. Statistics show that the life expectancy of people with these illnesses is twenty years less than average. Think about that. What could you do with twenty extra years?

**Suicide notwithstanding, very few people actually die FROM mental illness. But they do die much earlier WITH mental illness.**

Families and communities end up paying the costs of untreated mental illness. It robs children of time spent with parents and grandparents, and vice –versa. It turns friends into strangers. Neighborhoods lose valuable members and the economy loses productive workers when help isn’t available and affordable.

To put some hard numbers to these very personal issues, here are some statistics from the Centers for Disease Control & National Institutes for Health:

### Annual Economic Impact of SMI on the U.S. Economy

\$193 billion in lost wages  
\$100 billion in health care costs  
\$93 billion from suicide and suicide attempts  
\$24 billion in disability payments

**The good news is that much of this is preventable.** That’s because mental illness is treatable, with success rates higher than that of most ailments. Plus, treating mental illness is a cost-effective proposition, especially when you consider that the cost of NOT treating it is exponentially higher.

### Some words from our clients best illustrate the impact Portage Path has through these programs:

*“I was buried in pain...and you helped me lance the wounds so I could begin healing. I was aimless and you illuminated the path.”*

~ Alexis

*“I have so much hope today. Somehow my God, Portage Path, and the 12 steps to recovery have given me an identity that I’ve never had before.”*

~ Steve

*“Portage Path treatment works, as an unbiased staff coaching you to recovery. Recovery Rocks!”*

~ Kevin

## NEW HIRES

We welcome the following to the Portage Path Team!

- **Savannah Douglas** - Customer Service Representative at the Akron Office.
- **Michelle Bridgewater, LPCC** - Intake Therapist at the Akron Office
- **David Kern, LPC** - Intake Therapist at the Akron and Barberton Offices
- **Greg Jurica, LPCC, LICDC** - Clinical Counselor at North Summit

Portage Path Behavioral Health

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