

\$1M set aside for crisis center

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SANDUSKY - The new budget for the Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services Board of Erie County includes up to \$1 million to help launch the county health department's new Kaptur-Rogowski House.

That funding is part of the new annual budget, a little more than \$6 million, that went into effect this month.

In addition, the board is gearing up to seek approval in the November election for renewal levies that will continue local support for the board's mission, which is to provide mental health and substance abuse treatment for people who otherwise can't afford it.

Because the planned levies are renewals, voters won't be facing tax hikes.

The Kaptur-Rogowski House is a new 14-bed emergency crisis center, intended to provide immediate help for families and persons facing a mental health crisis.

It's scheduled to open Aug. 1 on the Sandusky-based campus of the Erie County Health Department. It's dependent upon whether the department can obtain state licensing and clear other hurdles, said Pete Schade, Erie County's health commissioner.

Among some other items the budget will fund includes:

- \$1.5 million for Firelands Counseling & Recovery
- \$729,000 for Volunteers of America, which operates local shelters
- \$400,000 for Bayshore Counseling
- \$340,000 for Sandusky Artisans, a peer support group for people dealing with substance abuse issues
- \$260,000 for Road to Hope, which provides residential treatment for people in recovery
- \$170,000 for Erie Shore Network, a peer support for people with mental health issues

Who will it help?

The board believes many of the clients being cared for at Kaptur House will be people who are dealing with substance abuse or mental health issues, said Caleb Stidham. He serves as both Erie County's treasurer and as a board spokesman.

The new budget authorizes the board to spend up to \$1 million over the course of the next year to cover the cost of local clients in Kaptur House.

That operational support will help the health department get Kaptur House up and running, Schade said.

"It's a great shot in the arm for Erie County and for the health department," Schade said.

Diane Taylor, executive director for Erie County board, has worked closely with the health department in the last couple of years as plans for Kaptur House went forward, Schade said.

"Our board has prioritized closing gaps that exist in the continuum of mental health and substance abuse services," Taylor said. "We are excited to partner with the health department in the startup of this new facility that will be greatly beneficial to the region."

The new facility was largely funded by a \$2 million grant obtained by U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur, D-Toledo.

Going to the polls

While the board gets plenty of federal and state funding, it also gets local support from three local levies. Two of them, which generate about \$1.1 million per year, are set to expire this year.

The board has asked the Erie County commissioners to put the renewal of the levies on the November ballot. A renewal levy does not increase taxes.

That's in the works, said Matt Old, one of the commissioners.

"The language is being prepared by the prosecutor's office," Old said. "I expect the board to vote to put the renewal on the ballot in the coming weeks."

