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Ohio START expands to four new counties

COLUMBUS – Gov. Mike DeWine’s signature child welfare sobriety and resiliency program, Ohio START, announced today the expansion of its model to include Adams, Madison, Montgomery and Pike counties, marking the addition of a seventh cohort and bringing the total number of participating counties to 56.

Ohio START (Sobriety, Treatment and Reducing Trauma) is an evidence-based intervention that helps families struggling with both substance use disorder and children services involvement by creating teams of caseworkers, family peer mentors and behavioral health providers to support them.

“Ohio START believes in preserving families by keeping children safely at home and providing wrap-around services that increase the likelihood of reunification when removal is necessary,” said Ohio START Director Fawn Gadel. “We are proud to support families on their recovery journey and hope to see the model continue to grow to serve more Ohioans.”

The national START model is rated on the federal Family First Prevention Services Clearinghouse. In 2023, Ohio became the first in the nation to receive national certification from Children and Family Futures (CFF).

Ohio START began in 2017 as a pilot project created by then Ohio Attorney General DeWine. It operated in 17 counties in the first year, and has continued to grow to reach 56 counties today. Ohio START is housed at and led by the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO).