

# TOWNHALLER

Your Monthly Townhall II Newsletter

## Legalization of Sports Betting

On December 22, 2021, Ohio Governor Mike Dewine signed House Bill 29 into law making Ohio the 33rd state to allow gambling on sports.

The Ohio Casino Control Commission is working to draw up the specific rules and regulations with the hopes of first bets being placed on January 1, 2023. The new law will allow wagers to be made on professional, college, and sporting events.

Casinos, sports teams, stadiums, bars and restaurants will be eligible to apply for gambling licenses. Cell phone apps that offer sports betting will also be legal. Ohio's eight professional sports teams and two events – NASCAR and PGA – and its four casinos and 11 racinos are expected to apply for licenses. The Ohio Casino Control Commission is hoping to begin taking applications from interested businesses starting in summer 2022.

There will be a 10% tax on net revenue with 98% anticipated to go to funding public and private K-12 education and the remaining 2% to go toward preventing and treating problem gambling across the state. As has been the case in other states that have legalized sports betting, it is expected that problem gambling numbers and calls to the state problem gambling helpline will increase.

**Townhall II provides educational services and treatment for problem and disordered gambling. If you or someone you know has gambling concerns, contact Townhall II at 330-678-3006 to get screened and complete an assessment.**



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# 2021 CARES Champions of Recovery Award

Stefani Whitmire, Peer Support Specialist at Townhall II, received the 2021 CARES Champions of Recovery Award from the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities. Whitmire was one of eight recipients in the state of Ohio for this annual award that recognizes frontline workers and leaders who have dedicated significant time and expertise to support and serve Ohioans impacted by substance use disorders.

Tamera Hunter, CEO of Townhall II, a non-profit agency in Kent, expressed her appreciation of Whitmire's work.

"Stefani has great compassion and commitment for helping others. Her work as a peer support specialist has been valuable to individuals and families impacted by addiction."

A peer support specialist is a person with "lived experience" who has been trained to support others who are struggling with mental health and addiction issues. Since peer supporters have been successful in their own recovery process, they are able to help others experiencing similar situations through shared understanding, respect, and mutual empowerment.

The award was presented by John Garrity, executive director of the Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County. "Peer support specialists play an important role in our continuum of care, and we are fortunate in Portage County to have Stefani, who is one of the best!"

To learn more about treatment and recovery services available in Portage County, contact the Addiction Helpline at Townhall II at 330-678-3006.

Mental Health and Recovery Board of Portage County, 2022



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It was such an honor receiving this award and very unexpected! I'm so grateful that the importance and value of peer recovery support is now widely recognized.

-Stefani Whitmire

# Happenings this Month

## February 2nd: Groundhog Day

Groundhog Day is celebrated in the U.S. each year on February 2nd. The first official Groundhog Day celebration took place on February 2, 1887, in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania.

## February 4th: Winter Olympics Games

The XXIV Winter Olympics games will be held in Beijing, China, from February 4th-20th. If you are interested in watching the ceremony as well as the games, NBC will broadcast the entire Olympic Games.

## February 8th: Safer Internet Day

This year marks the 19th celebration of Safer Internet Day! The goal is to join together to make the internet a safer and better place for all, especially for children. Safer Internet Day is celebrated across the world. This year's theme is, "Together for a better internet."

Interested in learning more about Safer Internet Day? Check out the [Safer Internet website](#) for more information.

## February 14th:

♡♡ HAPPY ♡♡  
VALENTINE'S  
Day

## February 21st:

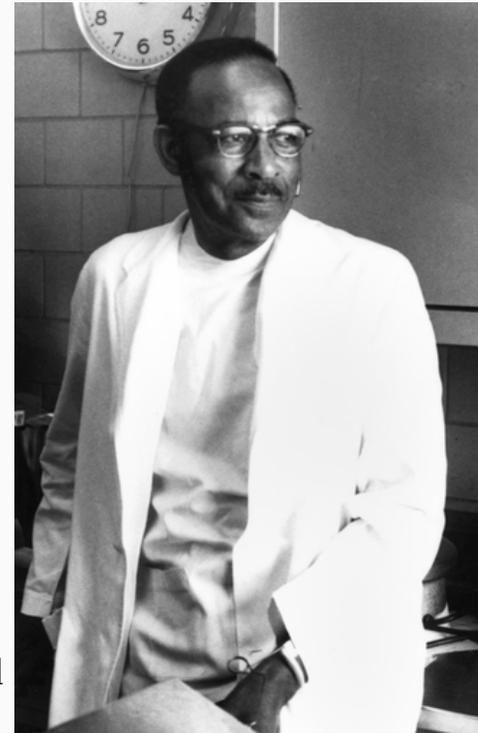


# Black History Month

February is African American history month, each year the Association for the study of African American Life and History has a theme for the month that is usually announced by the president. This year's theme is Black Health and Wellness. The medical industry is a point of both great accomplishments and great trauma within the community. Both of these elements of history should be understood and respected.

Over the centuries members of the African American community have been disregarded and treated as subhuman by members of the medical community. For years there was a belief that if someone was of African descent that meant that they experienced little to no pain compared to those of the white population. This was used as an excuse to perform surgeries on them without any form of anesthetics, even long after they became widely available. This idea is prevalent today where some modern textbooks will say that members of the black community have a higher pain tolerance than their white counterparts, including children. This in turn leads to discrimination in quality treatment and black patients being less likely to be listened to by doctors. As a result, there has been an understandable reluctance to trust the medical community. The same medical community that has benefited greatly from the contributions of the black community.

There have been many advances in the field of medicine due to members of the African American community that were not recognized until years after the fact. Vivian Thomas is a prime example of this. Thomas was a key person in the first infant open heart surgery in 1944. He figured out how to replicate a deadly children's birth defect on dogs so that the team could practice before the first surgery on a human. He also assisted with the surgery, but received no credit. All of this while being denied a formal education. He worked at John Hopkins officially as a lab assistant but in reality was performing and teaching others how to perform heart surgeries. He was both the highest paid lab assistant and highest paid African American on the John Hopkins campus. In 1976 he was awarded an honorary doctorate and promoted to a full time staff position where he continued to teach until his eventual retirement. Because of this lack of official recognition, he is often also left out of listed African American medical achievements.



This African American History Month, try to consider history in the context of what it means to different people. Look up the words and writings of the community and consider those over what others say about them. This month is about honoring and listening to African American voices throughout history as well as listening to the voices of those here now.

For more information check out these references:

[PBS: Partners of the Heart](#)

[Association for the Study of African American Life and History](#)

[Vox: The US medical system is still haunted by slavery](#)

# JOIN OUR TEAM

We are seeking caring, motivated individuals with a passion for helping others. Eligible candidates will answer our 24 Hour Crisis Helpline as well as occasionally see individuals on a walk-in basis. Training to answer our Helpline is provided on site. Some types of calls that are taken include suicide, depression, anxiety, grief and loss, sexual assault, substance use issues and interpersonal relationships. Candidates will also be answering additional lines designated for other agencies with which we have contracts.

**For more information, please contact Townhall II at 330-678-3006 or visit our website at [www.townhall2.com](http://www.townhall2.com).**

## Staff Spotlight

### Tiffany Martin



**Start Date:** April 2016

**Current Title:** Sexual Assault Prevention Specialist

**Previous Titles at Townhall II:** Transitional Youth Specialist

**Background into the field:** "I became interested in working with teens as a 12th grader when I became a mediator for my peers. I attended Kent State University and graduated with a Bachelor's of Science degree in Human Development and Family Studies in 2008. Between 2011 to now, I have worked at many organizations that cater to youth, such as, The Village Network (Youth Care Residential Specialist), Boys and Girls Club of the Western Reserve (Youth Development Specialist), Children's Advantage (Case Management CPST), and Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (Match Support Specialist).

**Fun Fact about Tiffany:** "Every summer my father and I go to the Great Lakes Medieval Faire in Rock Creek, OH. Because of these many visits, I now own 1 dagger and 3 swords (one called Excalibur)."

**Something Tiffany Says Often:** "Mannnn, Listen." Typically when a conversations get intense!