



**Portage County  
Emergency  
Management  
APP**



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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **PORTAGE COUNTY DEATH TOLL FROM COVID-19 REACHES 25, COUNTY CONTINUES EMERGENCY RESPONSE EFFORTS**

**RAVENNA, OH** – 25 residents of Portage County have passed away as of April 20, 2020 due to COVID-19.

“To those who have lost loved ones, we are sorry for your loss and we stand with you in this difficult time. We cannot imagine how difficult it has been to say good-bye without the traditions that bring comfort. But every day, we’ll keep the memory of your family members with us as we work with local communities, first responders and healthcare workers to confront the challenges we face. We are in this together for the duration,” said Portage County Commissioner Kathleen Clyde on behalf of commissioners.

“Our condolences go out to the family, friends and the community mourning the loss of a loved one,” said Portage County Health Commissioner Joseph Diorio. “The loss of our residents from COVID-19 reminds us of how important it is for public health to continue our multifaceted response as well as collaborating with partners to protect the health and wellbeing of residents in Portage County.”

Portage County agencies, both public and private, have been coordinating efforts well before the coronavirus reached Ohio and will continue to provide essential services moving forward. Following years of emergency planning, community partners are working collaboratively through various means to coordinate efforts and provide a unified response to this emergency.

“This is a true whole community response to combating COVID-19. It takes everyone doing their part to beat the curve; the public and all our critical worker sacrifices are duly noted. We also want residents to know that we will stay vigilant in coordinating our resources to support the efforts of our healthcare workers and institutions. Our hearts go out to the families of the residents we’ve lost,” said Ryan Shackelford, director of Portage County Emergency Management.

“During this uncertain time, I am notably mindful how the loss of a loved one is especially heartbreaking. We cannot currently gather to mourn and share grief in a way that can typically provide comfort. My sincere sympathy is extended for each individual loss. As we work to protect all residents, first responders and healthcare workers, we will hold our community members who have suffered a loss close at heart through the months ahead,” said Joan C. Seidel, Kent City Health Department Commissioner.

Commissioners and EMA officials applaud the sacrifice Portage County residents are making to “flatten the curve” and do their parts to bring an end to the pandemic. They voiced their thanks and realize the overwhelming and distressing affects on everyday life for all residents and communities. The local behavioral health system can provide support, especially for those who have suffered loss.

“Mourning the death of a loved one is hard, and the coronavirus crisis makes it even more difficult. Everyone grieves differently and there is not a set timetable. It’s important to get plenty of rest and reach out to others for comfort,” advised John Garrity, executive director of the Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County.

For residents struggling, there is help available in Portage County. Behavior health agencies are open during the pandemic and can deliver counseling remotely over the phone or through video conference. The Townhall II Helpline is available to provide support and referrals 24 hours a day at 330-678-HELP (4357).

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