

NOTE: *“NAMI Ohio Executive Director Terry Russell said the money could be put to almost immediate use helping individuals and families ‘who are in crisis and need relief.’”*

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State gives \$5 million for mental-health services to head off violence

By Alan Johnson

In the days following the Dec. 14 massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School, the phone lines lit up at the National Alliance on Mental Illness Ohio.

There were calls from parents worried about their children struggling with mental illness and from others concerned about the worsening crisis of untreated mental illness.

Since then, the list of families in crisis that the Ohio group is working with has topped 1,000.

Now, some of those children and young adults facing mental-health crises might be able to get help through a \$5 million intervention program established by Gov. John Kasich. The money will be used by mental-health and developmental-disabilities agencies across the state to help defuse potentially violent situations where a child poses a danger to himself, his family or others.

Although the Ohio program was in the works before a gunman took the lives of 20 children and seven adults in Newtown, Conn., it was clearly on the minds of the governor and other officials since then as they set aside money to deal with volatile mental-health situations before they make headlines.

“There are families that get themselves in a position where they have a young child or maybe even an adult child that has very serious problems, mental-health problems,” Kasich said yesterday after a news conference on expanded services for autistic children. “There’s two ways I look at things. One is we have to deal with the acute problem, and secondly we have to be concerned about the safety net that exists in our communities for the mentally ill.

“We can’t do everything, and this isn’t going to solve everything, but it’s at least, I think, a good start in terms of dealing with the problem we’re seeing all over the country and we know exists in our state. This is something that’s bothered me, and I’ve talked about it a long time.”

Article continued here: <http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2013/01/10/state-gives-5-million-to-head-off-violence.html>

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