

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MARILYN BROWN TO JOIN CHOICES ADVISORY BOARD

Franklin County Commissioner Marilyn Brown has been appointed to the advisory board of CHOICES, Franklin County's only domestic violence shelter and crisis hotline. The county has long partnered with CHOICES, which operates a temporary shelter and provides counseling, legal support and advocacy, and other services for victims of domestic violence, and is now under the oversight of Lutheran Social Services (LSS). Commissioner Brown has long targeted domestic violence issues and championed victims' rights and services, sitting on the board of Nationwide Children's Center for Family Safety and Healing, and chairing a taskforce on domestic violence as commissioner.

"Living with domestic violence is a terrible reality for too many of our neighbors," said Brown. "It's something that we, as a society, cannot stand for; and in the meantime, CHOICES and Franklin County are working hard to support victims and prosecute abusers."

CHOICES has provided services in Central Ohio since 1977, fielding almost 3,000 hotline calls each year, sheltering more than 500 local men, women, and children annually, and providing counseling, advocacy, and other support services to nearly 1,000 more clients. CHOICES has recently come under the Lutheran Social Services umbrella, and the advisory board is a new entity designed to provide guidance both to CHOICES and to Lutheran Social Services, which has operated in Central Ohio for more than 100 years but only recently begun serving domestic violence victims.

"We look forward to the expertise and passion Commissioner Brown will bring to the CHOICES advisory committee," said Reverend Larry A. Crowell, President and CEO of LSS. "Lutheran Social Services and CHOICES are dedicated to providing a safe haven and supportive services for families experiencing a domestic violence crisis, and Commissioner Brown's involvement highlights her commitment as well as the commitment of her fellow Franklin County Commissioners."

The Franklin County Commissioners have regularly supported CHOICES with county grants, and pass-through federal Justice Assistance Program and Violence Against Women grants, more than \$71,000 this year, and also provides approximately \$300,000 in funding for the agency through marriage license fees as provisioned by Ohio Law. Some Franklin County employees who routinely assist clients and families in person also receive training from CHOICES on recognizing the signs of abuse and appropriate responses.

Domestic violence can happen to anyone regardless of race, age, gender, or sexual orientation. It affects people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and education levels and, while both men and women can be victims, most victims are women and children. Victims of domestic violence or people who suspect that a friend or loved one is the victim of abuse can call CHOICES at 614-224-HOME.

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