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**The Ohio National Guard Counterdrug Program to Receive the 2023 Stick Your Neck Out for Prevention Award**

*Prevention Action Alliance announces the recipient of this year’s award for their annual fundraiser.*

**(Columbus, July 27, 2023)** –Prevention Action Alliance is thrilled to announce the *2023 Stick Your Neck Out for Prevention* award recipient. This signature award will be presented at the organization’s annual, *Your Role in Prevention* fundraiser. The champions of this award personify what it means to make a positive difference in the pivotal and valuable work that is prevention. The *2023 Stick Your Neck Out for Prevention* award recipient is the Ohio National Guard Counterdrug Program.

The Ohio National Guard Counterdrug Program actively invests in prevention coalitions across the state and supports law enforcement agencies and community-based organizations. Their relentless support for prevention enhances their efforts to counter the state’s active drug threat and anticipate, deter, and defeat the threat of illegal substances, trafficking, and violence in Ohio.

"The recognition our program receives for its prevention work is a tremendous honor. We firmly believe that our efforts contribute significantly to building a safer Ohio, making it a better place for our fellow citizens. We understand the importance of community-driven approaches and the positive impact they have on reducing drug-related issues." – Michael A. Barnauskas, LTC, Ohio National Guard Counterdrug Coordinator.

In addition, the Counterdrug Program’s dedication to prevention education and its commitment to creating a healthier Ohio makes them the ideal recipient of this principled award. Prevention is challenging but important work. They lead by example and prioritize prevention certification for their members. This commitment goes above and beyond expectations and should be recognized and applauded.

“Counterdrug’s investment in other coalitions across the state is remarkable, as well as its investment in prevention education and certification,” said Fran Gerbig, PAA Executive Director. “PAA is grateful for the support from the civil operator placed in our office and the immense help we received from the program to implement the "We Are Change" Rally. We couldn't do it without them.”

Prevention Action Alliance is pleased to present the Counterdrug Program representatives with the *Stick Your Neck Out for Prevention* award at this year’s *Your Role in Prevention* fundraiser, featuring keynote speaker the Honorable Patrick J. Kennedy. The event will occur on Wednesday, August 16, 2023, at the Greater Columbus Convention Center, 400 N. High Street in downtown Columbus.

Luncheon Sponsors include Mills James, Humana, Origo Branding Company, Aetna Better Health of Ohio/Ohio RISE, AUI, CompDrug, DBT in Schools, Nationwide Children’s Hospital, and Paxis Institute. The fundraiser supports various programs and initiatives to address substance misuse and mental health disorders, including prevention programs. By attending the event, guests can show their support for this critical cause and learn more about the resources available in their communities. To purchase your ticket and support prevention efforts throughout Ohio, visit <https://preventionactionalliance.org/events/your-role-in-prevention-luncheon/>.

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**About Prevention Action Alliance**

Prevention Action Alliance is a non-profit organization leading healthy communities in the prevention of substance misuse and promotion of mental health wellness. Programs and initiatives include Campus Cents, The G.A.P. Network, Know! Prevention Tips, the Ohio College Initiative to Enhance Student Wellness, the Ohio Youth-Led Prevention Network, SMART Bet, and the Statewide Prevention Coalition Association. For more information on Prevention Action Alliance, please visit [www.preventionactionalliance.org](http://www.preventionactionalliance.org/).