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## Governor Christie: We Need To Put A Brighter Spotlight On Addiction

Friday, December 23, 2016

Tags: [Addiction Taskforce](#)

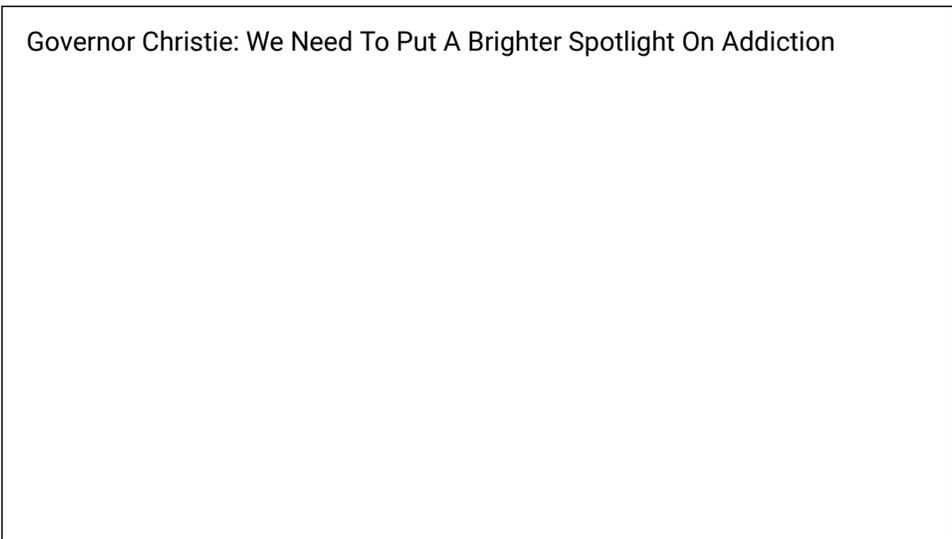


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### Transcript:

**Eric Scott:** I want to take some time to begin this month on the addiction and treatment initiatives. For many, who have a loved one suffering from addiction this is particularly a tough time of year –

**Governor Christie:** Yup.

**Eric Scott:** Candle light vigil at the State House last night with a few hundred people. I don't even know where to begin with that issue, I mean it's an issue that is, it's killing a generation in New Jersey.

**Governor Christie:** It is, and you know I've been involved in this for over 20 years. You know, I was 20 years ago on the board at Day Top Village, in Mendham, which is an adolescent drug treatment facility. Ever since that time, this has been a passion of mine I talked about it, when I ran for Governor in '09, and have tried to do the best that I can over the course of the last seven years nearly now to be able to do two things: One, to increase the availability of treatment for people, and two to try to remove and at some point hopefully to lower, and I hope at some point to remove the stigma that goes along with it, because families and the victims of this disease are stigmatized. And so at the candle light vigil last night we gave out 750 candles last night, so we had about that many people out in front of the State House. It was a huge crowd and a very emotional crowd. And what I was trying to do through that last night and some ads I know you've heard here on 101.5 and some other radio stations both in New York and Philadelphia area, with myself and Pastor Joe Carter from The New Hope Baptist Church, is to let people know there's help out there

available, dial 2-1-1, people can direct them. We're going to have a lot more to say about this in the State of the State address and a number of new proposed initiatives and some actions that I'm going to take unilaterally to make this situation, treatment more available to folks. But it is a heartbreaking thing, and I think anybody who has family members, friends, loved ones, colleagues at work who have been affected by this disease just knows that we need to do something. Today, I did an event in Walgreens where they're going to set up kiosks in all their stores so people can dispose of their unused prescription drugs. Because too many times people get pain killers or opiates and other dangerous drugs and they leave them around the house or they dump them down the toilet which is bad for the environment. And so we're working on that and there will be some other things in the prescription drug area that we'll be announcing during the State of the State and right around there. So, listen, none of it matters if you've got a person, and especially in this holiday season, which is why we've started to do those radio ads, it's a real trigger for a lot of people.

**Eric Scott:** And the stigma is not just for the addict it's for the families of the addict –

**Governor Christie:** It's even more for the families, Eric –

**Eric Scott:** They're so embarrassed and have no, you know, no idea where to go get help, because if you're wrapped up in the middle of that you think you're the only person that's ever dealt with that before.

**Governor Christie:** Oh yeah, and listen, and the stigma quite frankly is more for the families than it is for the addicts, because the families, you know, people make value judgements.

**Eric Scott:** Right.

**Governor Christie:** Well you must not have been a good parent.

**Eric Scott:** Right.

**Governor Christie:** You must not have been a good husband or wife. You must not have been a good brother or sister. You know this is not the truth, but we have made moral judgements on this. Now, you know, I've spent a good part of my life as a prosecutor I'm as anti-drug as anybody, and we've had conversations about that and phone calls about that over time. But everybody makes mistakes, and once you make a mistake in judgement, there's nobody listening to this call tonight I suspect, this show, that you know hasn't made a mistake in judgement that they wish they could take back –

**Eric Scott:** Sure.

**Governor Christie:** They're probably just lucky that it didn't involve drugs, or if it did that they didn't have the type of addictive personality and genetics that caused them to become an addict. That's just Russian roulette. It's just luck. And so we can't make judgments, I'm not saying people should be forgiven for trying drugs. What I'm saying is that once they do and they become an addict it's a disease, just like heart disease, cancer, diabetes, all of which those have elements of personal conduct, which can contribute to them. My mother was a smoker. I've talked often about that and died of lung cancer. My mother completely contributed to her own death. Does that mean we shouldn't have gotten her chemotherapy and radiation and treatment to try to save her life? Of course not. Does it mean that my father was an awful husband, or that we were lousy children, because she had that addiction? No, it means that my mother had an addiction, a disease that she could not deal with, and, you know, we see that all the time in lots of other areas we don't stigmatize it but we stigmatize this. So there's going to be a lot more that's going to come after the first of the year, this is going to be one of the two or three big things that I emphasize in my final year as Governor. I've been emphasizing it the whole time but I'm going to be putting more of a spotlight on it, because we need to.

**Eric Scott:** And 2-1-1, and how long will that number work for addiction services? Is it now part of the 2-1-1 system?

**Governor Christie:** Yup, it's now part of the 2-1-1 system and we're going to have some new announcements about streamlining peoples, because one of the things that you mentioned when you were speaking which is true, is that a lot of people just don't know where to go or what to do, and so we're going to be doing some things to make that even easier in conjunction with Rutgers and the center we have there. So I'm trying to bring together all the resources we have, and make it easy for people to be able to access them, and easier for them to be able to pay for them as well.

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