

Lighting The Way To Recovery

Governor Christie Remains Committed To Bringing Addiction Out Of The Shadows And Into The Light

The 2nd Annual Candlelight Vigil enhances Governor Christie's record of helping reclaim lives in the State of New Jersey and across America. Under Governor Christie's leadership, New Jersey has invested the most state funds in history to address the opioid crisis, creating a roadmap to recovery that is a national model.

The Governor has been committed to saving lives and solving this emergency since 1995, when he first partnered with religious and nonprofit leaders to support people with the disease of addiction. Since the start of his administration, Governor Christie has enacted reforms, programs, and services to prevent addiction, to make addiction treatment more accessible and effective, and to ensure people can reenter society as productive members, without recidivism and the stigma surrounding this disease.

New Jersey is serving more people with holistic and individualized recovery plans through a variety of innovative channels. As hundreds of people gather today to remember loved ones lost and join hand-in-hand with those who are battling addiction, let's look at how the State of New Jersey is [leading the charge](#) to fight opioid and drug abuse.

New Jersey Is A National Leader In The Fight Against The Opioid Epidemic

Leading The President's Commission On Combating Drug Addiction And The Opioid Crisis: In March 2017, President Donald Trump named Governor Chris Christie as the chairman of a newly formed commission to address America's growing drug addiction crisis. The first [opioid roundtable](#) took place on March 29, to start shaping life-saving policies for the nation.

Final Report From President's Commission On Combating Drug Addiction And The Opioid Crisis: On November 1, 2017, Governor and Chairman Christie presented President Donald Trump with the [final report](#) prepared by the President's Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis. This final report commended President Trump for declaring the opioid crisis a national public health emergency under federal law, as was recommended by the Commission's interim report, and recommended 65 actions that may be taken at the federal level to address a crisis that is killing 175 Americans each day. These recommendations will help doctors, addiction treatment providers, parents, schools, patients, faith-based leaders, law enforcement, insurers, the medical industry, and researchers fight opioid abuse and misuse, in part, by reducing federal barriers and increasing support to the effective programs and innovation.

Governor Christie Expands Model Initiatives For Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery: In September 2017, Governor Christie committed \$200 million in additional funds to enhance programs and services that are national models to address America's opioid and substance use disorder emergency. The Governor deployed eight state departments to implement 25 initiatives that will create or enhance opportunities for addiction prevention, treatment, and recovery. These and [dozens](#) of other effective solutions previously delivered by Governor Christie serve as a national blueprint to help fight drug abuse. A summary of these 25 initiatives may be accessed [here](#).

PREVENTION

REACHNJ: In his 2017 State of the State Address, Governor Christie announced the launch of a one-stop website, www.ReachNJ.gov, and 24/7 helpline, 1-844-REACHNJ. Both resources are free and allow personal information to remain anonymous. By clicking or calling, people have immediate access to life-saving prevention, treatment, recovery, and reentry information.

These resources provide live interactive assistance, treatment locations, insurance guidance, parental tips, and information on support programs for those in recovery, enhancing public awareness for those who are most in need. People can access programs offered by state agencies and be connected with information for private and nonprofit recovery groups.

This website and help line guides those affected by the disease of addiction through what can be a daunting bureaucracy, especially for those currently in crisis.

Declaring Opioid Drug Abuse A Public Health Crisis: In January 2017, Governor Christie intensified his administration's commitment to the fight against substance abuse by signing Executive Order 219, declaring the opioid epidemic a public health crisis in New Jersey. This Executive Order created the Governor's Task Force on Drug Abuse Control that recently [published](#) a comprehensive, coordinated strategy to combat the drug-abuse epidemic by working with all areas of state government, in addition to local, federal, and private entities, as well as the Facing Addiction Task Force.

This Executive Order also allows state Attorney General Chris Porrino to take all necessary steps to limit the initial prescription of opioids for acute pain and establish standards such that additional quantities may only be prescribed after further consultation with the patient.

Nation's Strongest Limit On Opioid Prescriptions: In February 2017, Governor Christie signed into law a measure [establishing America's strongest](#) maximum limit of five days for an initial opioid prescription for the treatment of acute pain. In the 26 months before the five-day rule took effect, New Jersey patients were receiving an average of **476,258 prescriptions** for opioids each month, for an average of **33,890,993 units per month**. Since the limit was imposed in March, the number of prescriptions has dropped to **403,959 per month**, and the total monthly units has fallen to **27,442,261**.

Prescription Monitoring Program (NJMPMP): Governor Christie launched the NJMPMP in 2011, to create a centralized data sharing system for healthcare providers and pharmacists in partner states to track prescription sales of narcotic painkillers, opioids, and other drugs that often lead to deadly heroin addictions. Prescribers in 14 states now use the NJMPMP to prevent and treat drug addiction, misuse and multistate "doctor shopping"—a common way substance abusers feed their habits and offenders sell on the streets to vulnerable people.

NJMPMP includes:

- South Carolina
- Minnesota
- Rhode Island
- Virginia
- Connecticut
- Delaware
- Ohio
- New York
- Pennsylvania
- Massachusetts
- New Hampshire
- Maine
- West Virginia
- Vermont

In June 2017, Governor Christie announced [NJMPMP enhancements](#) to ensure people are treated, more overdoses are prevented, and to mitigate overprescribing. These supplement two prior improvements by the Attorney General:

- Allowing physicians to analyze two years of a patient's prescription records, a year more than previously allowed. The expanded searches provide a more comprehensive picture of that patient's controlled substance history; giving prescribers a better chance of identifying people at risk of prescription abuse, addiction or overdose, and allowing them to better connect at-risk or addicted patients with appropriate treatment services.
- Automatically converting dosages of commonly-prescribed opioids of differing potency, such as codeine, fentanyl, and oxycodone, into a standard value known as "morphine milligram equivalents." This conversion allows prescribers to compare the total potency of different opioid medications a patient is consuming with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines, and to instantly identify patients who may need closer monitoring, tapering, or other measures to reduce risk.

NJMPMP data shows that prescribers in New Jersey are successfully making use of the ability to view cross-border prescription data. In 2016, the interstate hub enabled **1,015,897 prescriber data requests** between New Jersey and our interstate partners, **a 512 percent increase** from 2015.

During the first five months of 2017, the interstate hub enabled a total of **2,672,176 prescriber data requests** between New Jersey and our interstate partners, **a 345 percent increase** from the same period in 2016.

In April 2015, Governor Christie signed legislation that strengthens the Attorney General's ability to coordinate statewide law enforcement efforts against opioid abuse in the Garden State. These coordination activities include the Division of Consumer Affairs and professional licensing boards in identifying, investigating, and prosecuting the illegal sources and distribution of prescription opioid drugs; taking appropriate steps to enhance the oversight by professional licensing boards; and providing training to law enforcement officials, physicians, and pharmacists.

This legislation also enhances the NJPMP's usefulness to healthcare professionals through a first-in-the-nation mobile app launched by the Division of Consumer Affairs that allows authorized users of the NJPMP to access the database via Apple smartphones and handheld devices.

In July 2015, Governor Christie signed legislation that broadens the use of the NJPMP by doctors and pharmacists.

- The legislation expanded New Jersey healthcare professionals' access to the NJPMP by, among other things, requiring that prescribers and pharmacists register for NJPMP access, and requiring that physicians consult the NJPMP under limited circumstances.
- In addition, pharmacists are now required to submit identifying information for any individual who picks up a prescription for a patient, and for pharmacies to submit information to the NJPMP every day, rather than every 30 days.
- The law codified the Attorney General's Office current practice of automatically registering prescribers and pharmacists for NJPMP access when granting or renewing the practitioners' State registration to prescribe or dispense Controlled Dangerous Substances (CDS).

Project Medicine Drop: In New Jersey, the Project Medicine Drop program is an important component of efforts to halt the abuse and diversion of prescription drugs by providing consumers with an opportunity to discard unused prescription medications every day throughout the year at participating law enforcement agencies. Having drop-off points at police departments, sheriff's offices, State Police stations, military installations, and college public safety agencies across New Jersey allows citizens to safely dispose of their unused, excess, or expired prescription medications, keeping them out of the hands of those who might misuse them.

- Since its launch in 2011, Project Medicine Drop (PMD) has resulted in the collection of 177,180 pounds – or just over 88 tons - of unused medications. For 2016 alone, 68,200 pounds of prescription drugs were dropped off at collection locations throughout the state. And, in just the first two quarters of 2017, more than 39,800 pounds have been collected.
- In April 2015, Governor Christie signed legislation to expand PMD at the discretion of the Department of Law & Public Safety's (L&PS). It also required L&PS to post on its [website](#) a list of all secure prescription medicine drop-off locations, including receptacles maintained by the Division of Consumer Affairs, as well as any receptacle located in New Jersey that is approved by the federal Drug Enforcement Administration.
- On July 24, 2017, the Department of Law & Public Safety held a "Prescription Drug Take-Back Day" for state workers in Trenton. The one-day Program collected 465 pounds of prescription drugs.
- Governor Christie also announced a new interactive component to [ReachNJ](#), enhancing the state's one-stop drug addiction prevention, treatment, and recovery website to easily connect people with the nearest PMD collection sites.

To date, 249 stationary drop boxes and 179 mobile drop boxes have been issued statewide.

Online Portal to Report Abuse or Diversion of Prescription Opioids: In August 2017, Governor Christie announced that Attorney General Christopher Porrino (or the Division of Consumer Affairs) launched the Suspicious Activity Report ("SAR"), a web-based portal that allows pharmacists, medical practitioners, and members of the public to easily report suspected abuse or diversion of controlled substances. The SAR portal, which can be accessed online, allows individuals to report suspected activities such as the indiscriminate prescribing of opioids, doctor shopping to stockpile drugs, or the circulation of forged or stolen prescriptions.

Rule Limiting Payments Prescribers Can Accept for Various Services from Drug Companies: In August 2017, Governor Christie announced that Attorney General Christopher Porrino proposed a new rule prohibiting prescribers from accepting lavish meals and uncapped compensation for speaking engagements, consulting work, and other services from drug companies. The rule, expected to take effect in December, addresses growing concerns that doctors are allowing drug company money to influence their prescribing habits, especially when it comes to highly-addictive opioids. Last year, New Jersey doctors collected \$69 million from drug companies and device manufacturers. Two-thirds of the \$69 million received by New Jersey's doctors went to just 300 physicians, with 39 each having received at least \$200,000. Prohibiting prescribers from forming unsavory financial relationships with drug companies reduces the risk they will be unduly influenced to indiscriminately prescribe the dangerous, habit-forming drugs fueling the opioid addiction crisis.

Walgreens Collaboration: In December 2016, Governor Christie visited the Walgreen's pharmacy in East Brunswick to announce a collaboration with Walgreen's for their Safe Medication Disposal Program. Their efforts are the first of their kind by a nationwide retailer to provide a safe and convenient way to dispose of unwanted, unused or expired prescriptions, including controlled dangerous substances (CDS), and over-the-counter medications at no cost.

Preventing Over-The-Counter Drug Abuse: In October 2015, Governor Christie signed legislation prohibiting the sale of medications containing dextromethorphan, a substance found in more than 120 over-the-counter cold medications, to any person under the age of 18, unless they have a prescription. It required the Department of Health to post a link on its [website](#) containing a list of products in which dextromethorphan is an active ingredient.

Expanding Addiction Education:

- **Department of Education:** The Governor charged the Commissioner of Education with creating a model curriculum specific to opioids so that every school has access to comprehensive opioid-inclusive drug education. Through the NJDOE's Recovery High School Access Project grant, two existing New Jersey public recovery high schools – Raymond Lesniak ESH Recovery High School in Union County and KEYS Academy in Matawan-Aberdeen in Monmouth County – received \$1.3 million each to increase the number of students able to attend the programs. An additional NJDOE grant opportunity, the Recovery High School Planning Project, will award a maximum of \$100,000 to one public school district in the southern region of the state that partners with a substance abuse treatment center and develops a plan for a new recovery high school program accessible to high school students in recovery in the southern counties.
- **Department of Corrections:** Governor Christie directed Corrections Commissioner Gary Lanigan to expand DOC's Project PRIDE, which brings minimum security inmates to middle and high schools to share how drug abuse led them to addiction and prison.

Emergency Order Subjecting Seven 'Fentanyl Analogs' To The Strictest Level Of State Control: In September 2016, Governor Christie announced that Attorney General Christopher Porrino issued an emergency order subjecting seven 'fentanyl analogs' to the strictest level of state control. These fentanyl knockoffs – often more potent and deadly than their legal prototype – are usually disguised as less potent drugs such as heroin, oxycodone, or other abused prescription drugs. Last year, the federal Drug Enforcement Administration listed New Jersey as one of the five states hit hardest by a surge in fentanyl-related deaths.

Expanding The Pediatric Behavioral Health Collaborative: In January of 2017, the Governor announced an additional \$5 million for the statewide expansion of this successful pilot program providing telehealth hubs with a psychiatrist on call for pediatricians. Participating pediatricians receive training on how to screen children for behavioral health conditions and substance use and provide immediate connection to a specialist and referral source, while the youth and their parents are in the office. In urgent cases, a face-to-face consultation is available within hours on the very same day.

TREATMENT

Guaranteeing Insurance Coverage: In February 2017, Governor Christie signed into law a healthcare reform meant to [guarantee insurance coverage](#) for more people to access immediate drug addiction treatment. This law makes New

Jersey the only state in which people with insurance are guaranteed coverage for six months of necessary addiction treatment. These reforms will ensure that:

- No one will be turned away from treatment for insurance reasons, if a licensed provider prescribes substance abuse disorder treatment;
- People diagnosed with a substance use disorder will have covered treatment for 180 days, starting the day they need it, including long-term out-patient treatment;
- Covered medication-assisted treatments must be provided without the imposition of prior approval from a carrier; and
- Treatment for substance abuse disorders must be covered by the carrier to the same extent as any other covered medical condition without increased copayments, deductibles, or co-insurance.

Saving Lives: In 2014, the Christie Administration issued a waiver to more than 28,000 certified Emergency Medical Technicians to allow them to administer the life-saving opiate antidote Naloxone, or Narcan. Since April 2014, there have been more than **23,500** deployments of Narcan by law enforcement and EMS agencies throughout New Jersey and 10,000 deployments in 2016 alone.

In June 2015, Governor Christie announced that police departments and other public first responder entities can now purchase naloxone at a significant discount through an agreement negotiated with the New Jersey Office of the Attorney General and drug manufacturer Amphastar Pharmaceuticals, Inc. The agreement helps secure the affordability and availability of naloxone kits to New Jersey law enforcement and first responders, who deployed the kits more than 1,000 times in 2014.

This year, the Governor signed legislation to make Narcan even [more available](#) without a prescription across this state.

Establishing An Opioid Overdose Prevention Program To Enhance The Success Of Narcan: Building on Governor Christie's statewide expansion of the Narcan antidote program, the Department of Health Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) funds the Opioid Overdose Prevention Program. This new program provides education to residents at risk of an overdose, as well as to their friends and family, and trains individuals to recognize an opiate overdose and to subsequently provide life-saving rescue measures using Narcan to reverse the effects of an opioid overdose.

- From the time the regionalized \$675,000 Opioid Overdose Prevention Program (OOPP) began in November 2015 through the end of October 2016, 3,504 individuals have been trained to administer naloxone and 2,958 naloxone kits have been distributed during 325 DMHAS-funded trainings throughout the state.

Opening New Jersey's First-Ever Dedicated State Correctional Drug Treatment Facility: In his 2016 State of the State Address, Governor Christie called for reforms to fundamentally change how New Jersey treats addiction behind prison walls – making those efforts smarter, more accessible and more effectively integrated with re-entry efforts to help people get and stay clean. Thanks to these efforts, the former Mid-State Correctional Facility [reopened in April](#) as a 696-bed drug treatment facility for inmates to reclaim their lives and avoid recidivism. Governor Christie invested \$2 million to this critical initiative, which is being operated by the Department of Corrections with the treatment component licensed by the Department of Human Services (DHS).

Medicaid Expansion: Through the expansion of the Medicaid program, NJ FamilyCare covers 340,000 newly eligible adults with medical benefits, including treatment for behavioral health conditions.

- **Interim Managing Entity:** Governor Christie announced the formation of an Interim Managing Entity for addiction treatment in January 2015. By moving away from fragmented treatment options, this newly-funded entity has improved the way the State delivers substance use disorder services to Medicaid enrollees and low-income resident that lack insurance coverage..
 - The program launched in July 2015 and has already received more than 111,000 calls from New Jerseyans looking to improve their lives through treatment and recovery.

- **Behavioral Health Rate Reimbursement:** The Governor made a historic financial commitment to raise reimbursement rates, which has improved access to substance use and mental health treatments, with a combined State and federal investment in Fiscal Year 2018 of more than \$136 million. That rate increase, which is the first significant behavioral health rate increase in more than a decade, allows the State to provide more competitive reimbursement rates for services and providers and extend access to care. These increased reimbursement rates allow for improved critical services and more treatment capacity for those who need it most.
 - Overall, the new rates increased reimbursement by about 20 percent and in some cases as much as 50 percent for providers serving Medicaid enrollees and uninsured individuals. This represents a significant reinvestment of state savings and federal funds, and the largest increase overall to this community in over a decade.

Connecting Individuals With Recovery Coaches Following An Overdose: As a direct result of the Facing Addiction Task Force's work, Governor Christie announced the launch of the "Recovery Coaches" program to reach and connect drug overdose survivors with treatment, counseling, and support services in the immediate aftermath of their overdose – a critical moment for successful intervention.

In June 2015, the NJ Department of Human Services began the contracting process to develop an Opioid Overdose Recovery Program to put Recovery Coaches and Patient Navigators on the ground in hospitals to respond to individuals who are reversed from opioid overdoses and treated in a hospital emergency department as a result of the reversal. This program utilizes Recovery Coaches to engage overdose survivors in non-clinical assistance, recovery supports, and appropriate referrals for assessment and substance use treatment. This program puts support within reach for overdose survivors immediately after they are stabilized.

- Already demonstrating success in Camden, Essex, Monmouth, Ocean, and Passaic counties, the Recovery Coach program connects people who have been saved from drug overdoses – often with the opioid reversal drug Narcan - with recovery coaches who can provide guidance and support and help them into treatment for their addiction. In November, the program expanded to Atlantic, Bergen, Hudson, Gloucester and Middlesex counties. A Request For Proposal is currently underway to add the remaining counties.
- In 2016 there were 1,243 reversals seen with 357 going to detox or treatment and 229 going to recover receiving recovery supports.

As part of the Governor's 25 new initiatives of September 2017, the state Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services is being allocated \$21 million to expand the Recovery Coach Program. This expansion will be done in three ways: Establishing post-treatment recovery coaching; serving all overdose admissions to partner hospital emergency departments, beyond the current offering for those who have received Naloxone; and linking Recovery Coaches to people in treatment programs at Mid-State and Edna Mahon Correctional Facilities to sustain recoveries and break the costly cycle of recidivism.

Statewide Expansion Of Drug Court: Governor Christie followed through on his commitment to take a smarter and more effective approach focused on treating drug-addicted offenders by signing into law landmark, bipartisan legislation to put in place a statewide, mandatory drug court program. The legislation acts on Governor Christie's belief that no life is disposable and that it is a commonsense and moral imperative to help individuals dealing with drug addiction reclaim their lives with treatment, rather than warehousing them in prison.

The **Fiscal Year 2018** provided nearly **\$64 million** to support the Drug Courts.

- By July 1, all 15 vicinages will participate in the Drug Court Program. Currently, there are 12 vicinages covering 17 counties, (Ocean, Hudson, Somerset/Hunterdon/Warren, Passaic, Mercer, Atlantic/Cape May, Bergen, Burlington, and Monmouth, Essex, Cumberland/Salem/Gloucester and Middlesex) and increased funding in the Fiscal Year 2017 budget will support the operational costs needed to expand the Drug Court Program into the final three vicinages, Camden, Passaic, Morris/Sussex.

Since 2002, more than 21,000 individuals have been enrolled in drug courts throughout New Jersey. The number of current active participants is 6,110. This Fiscal Year alone, 1,792 individuals have been admitted to drug court, 99 percent of whom otherwise would have gone to New Jersey State prisons.

Drug Court Has Helped New Jerseyans Turn Their Lives Around: The rate at which Drug Court graduates are re-arrested for new offenses is 18.8 percent and the reconviction rate is 6.9 percent.

- This is compared to re-arrest rates for drug offenders released from prison that stand at 53 percent with a re-conviction rate of 37 percent.

In August 2015, Governor Christie signed legislation allowing for the completion of a special probation drug court program with use of medication-assisted treatment (MAT). Through this bill, the treatment provider rather than a judge can now decide whether MAT is clinically appropriate for convicted offenders who have been admitted to the Drug Court program.

RECOVERY

Providing Options For College Students in Recovery Seeking Substance-Free Housing: The Fiscal Year 2018 budget provides \$1.5 million in funding for on-campus housing for college students in recovery. This program provides students with a sober environment in the form of "recovery dorms," counseling, and additional supports, all of which are useful tools in the life-long battle to maintain sobriety.

The substance abuse recovery housing program was established through August 2015 legislation signed by Governor Christie to require four-year public colleges and universities, including Rutgers New Brunswick, Ramapo College, The College of New Jersey, Montclair State University, Rowan University, and Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, to have programs up and running within four years. The college may designate an entire dormitory building, or an area within a dormitory such as a floor or wing. The Rutgers New Brunswick campus already has a robust and comprehensive college recovery housing program, which was the first in the country and serves as a national model for campus recovery housing.

One-Stop Access To Help Ex-Offenders Battling Drug Addiction: In his 2015 State of the State Address, Governor Christie announced a groundbreaking one-stop model in connecting comprehensive services to ex-offenders re-entering society based on the principle of Integrated Reintegration. The New Jersey Re-Entry Corporation (NJRC) streamlines services available to ex-offenders to ensure they receive the kind of support they need to reclaim their lives and eventually move off government safety net programs and into the workplace. Operational funding has been provided for NJRC sites Jersey City, Newark, Paterson and Toms River.

Through the program, The New Jersey Reentry Corporation works to refer or provide services to reentry clients, including: sober housing, substance use disorder treatment, employment services, help with an ID or driver's license, pro bono legal representation, and access to wrap-around social service programs such as Medicaid and food stamps.