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## Governor Christie Selected to Lead America's Fight Against Growing Drug Addiction Crisis

Wednesday, March 29, 2017

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President Trump today named Governor Chris Christie as the chairman of a newly formed commission to address America's growing drug addiction crisis. The President and Governor Christie participated in an opioid roundtable at the White House, during which compelling stories were told by New Jerseyans AJ Solomon, former addict and founder of Victory Bay Recovery Center in Laurel Springs; Pam Garozzo, a New Jersey state worker who lost her son to a heroin overdose and is now a drug awareness advocate; and advocate Vanessa Vitolo, a recovering addict.

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### Governor Christie's Opening Remarks At White House Opioid Roundtable Di...



This volunteer position is Governor Christie's opportunity to develop more widespread life-saving addiction prevention, treatment and reentry initiatives. Over the past several years, the Governor has enacted policies and programs in New Jersey, including a five-day restriction on opioid prescriptions, that can serve as a national model.

The need for greater solutions is indisputable. Consider:

- One American dies every 19 minutes from an overdose of heroin or prescription opioids;
- Four out of five new heroin users start by misusing prescription painkillers;
- New Jersey's drug overdose death rate has escalated almost 22 percent between 2014 and 2015, with a 30-percent increase in heroin deaths over the previous year and triple the number of deaths caused by the synthetic

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opioid fentanyl; and

- Four times the number of people died of drug overdoses than were murdered last year, and three times the number compared to car crashes.

Here is some of the coverage of today's announcement on the new Opioid and Drug Abuse Commission:

**Associated Press:** Christie, Trump to launch drug addiction task force

**CNN:** Christie will advise Trump panel on opioid addiction

**Huffington Post:** Chris Christie Will Lead Donald Trump's Effort To Combat Opioid Crisis

**Philadelphia Inquirer:** Christie will head opioid abuse panel for Trump

**The Hill:** Christie joins Trump's opioid task force: 'This is an epidemic'

**The Record:** Christie to lead White House search for opioid solutions

**Washington Examiner:** Christie to lead new opioid commission under Trump administration

**Washington Post:** Chris Christie to lead Trump White House drug commission

**Vox:** Gov. Chris Christie passed one of the most aggressive laws to combat the opioid epidemic And President Trump is tapping him to lead a commission on the epidemic.

Since the start of his administration, Governor Chris Christie has placed a spotlight on second chances. Whether it is a struggle with addiction, a mental health issue, or a criminal history, Governor Christie understands that all New Jerseyans deserve a chance to reclaim their lives. Here is some additional background on Governor Christie's commitment:

## The Governor's Commitment To Reclaiming Lives Has Been A Top Priority Since The Start Of His Administration

**JULY 2012: Ushered A Statewide Expansion Of Drug Court & Mandatory Treatment Capacity:** Governor Christie signed landmark, bipartisan legislation implement a statewide, mandatory drug court program. The law will establish drug court programs in all of New Jersey's 21 counties – an profound expansion from the previous administration under which non-mandatory drug court programs operated in just three counties.

- Governor Christie furthered his commitment by adding \$8.5 million for drug court expansion and treatment in the Fiscal Year 2016 budget, providing additional funding to permit the Department of Human Services to expand treatment to approximately 1,000 clients in both inpatient and outpatient facilities and expand the capacity needed to continue drug court expansion.

**MAY 2013: Signed The Bipartisan Overdose Protection Act:** Governor Chris Christie signed the bipartisan Overdose Protection Act, establishing a two-prong approach to help prevent drug overdose deaths in New Jersey. First, it provides legal protection to people who are in violation of the law while they are attempting to help a drug overdose victim. Second, it eliminates negative legal action against health care professionals or bystanders who administer overdose antidotes in life-threatening situations.

- In February 2015, Governor Christie signed an expansion of this Act, adding a provision providing immunity to first responders who administer and dispense Narcan.

**APRIL 2014: Expanded NJ's Life-Saving Narcan Program:** Governor Christie implemented a statewide program to help reduce the number of heroin-related deaths by training and equipping police officers and first responders to administer the antidote Narcan to overdose victims. Since April 2014, there have been more than **22,000** deployments of Narcan by law enforcement and EMS agencies throughout New Jersey.

**SEPTEMBER 2014: Created The Facing Addiction Task Force:** Governor Christie and Pastor Joe A. Carter of The New Hope Baptist Church, in Newark, hosted a summit to start a conversation and call to action on ending the stigma on drug addiction and treatment. The following month, Governor Christie created the Facing Addiction Task Force, a 12-member team of leaders and experts from inside and outside of government, chaired by Pastor Joe Carter and co-chaired by former Governor Jim McGreevey, to fight addiction through treatment and prevention.

**OCTOBER 2014: Expanded of Prescription Monitoring Program (NJMPMP) to Include Interstate Data-Sharing:** Governor Christie expanded the NJMPMP's interstate data-sharing capabilities to connect with the State of Delaware's Prescription Monitoring Program.

**JANUARY 2015: Created One-Stop Access To Help Ex-Offenders Battling Drug Addiction:** In his 2015 State of the State Address, Governor Christie announced the first initiative to be implemented under the Facing Addiction Task Force's guidance: A groundbreaking one-stop model for connecting comprehensive services to ex-offenders re-entering society. Based on the principle of integrated reintegration, the Governor announced a program designed to streamline services available to ex-offenders to ensure they receive the kind of support they need to reclaim their lives and eventually re-enter society.

- Through this program, The Reentry Corporation has worked to refer to 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. The New Jersey Reentry Corporation was formed with initial funding from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA), and was later provided operational funding for Jersey City, Newark, Paterson and Toms River.

**JANUARY 2015: Provided a Comprehensive Referral Source for Addiction Services:** Governor Christie announced the formation of an Interim Managing Entity for addiction treatment to advance the administration's efforts to take a smarter and more effective approach in how the State supports individuals with substance use disorders. The Fiscal Year 2016 budget provides \$2.3 million to create a single point of entry for individuals in crisis and their families. Through this new management contract with Rutgers' University Behavioral Health Care, individuals who are

uninsured or on Medicaid with addiction disorders are able to more effectively access available services and resources throughout the State.

- The program launched in July 2015 and has already received more than 111,000 calls from New Jerseyans seeking to improve their lives through treatment and recovery.

**JUNE 2015: Provided Funds For Volunteers of America:** In an effort to continue expanding effective re-entry services for those struggling with drug addiction, the Governor allocated \$1.5 million in 2015 for Volunteers of America to provide expanded re-entry and drug treatment services in Atlantic City and Trenton.

**JULY 2015: Expanded NJPMP Access To Doctors And Pharmacists:** Governor Christie continued to build on the effectiveness of NJPMP by signing legislation that broadens the use of the NJPMP by doctors and pharmacists, and implement new methods for preventing "doctor shopping" that facilitate prescription and opioid abuse. Additionally, New Jersey launched the first-in-the-nation mobile app that provides authorized users of the NJPMP access to the database via smartphones and handheld devices.

**AUGUST 2015: Established College & University Substance Abuse Recovery Housing Programs:** Governor Christie signed legislation requiring four-year public colleges and universities to establish a substance abuse recovery housing program within four years.

**SEPTEMBER 2015: Connected People 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 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 state Department of Human Services (DHS) 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 reversed from opioid overdoses and treated at hospital emergency departments as a result of the reversal.

**OCTOBER 2015: Prevented Over-The-Counter Drug Abuse:** To address the growing problem of teenagers overusing or abusing dextromethorphan, 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.

**JANUARY 2016: Expanded NJPMP:** The Christie Administration Announced the expansion of NJPMP to share data with Rhode Island, Virginia, and Minnesota, bringing the total to five states.

**JANUARY 2016: Announced New Jersey's First Ever Dedicated And Licensed State Correctional Drug Treatment Facility:** Seeking to fundamentally change how New Jersey treats addiction behind prison walls – making those efforts smarter, more accessible and more effectively integrated with reentry efforts to help people stay clean. Governor Christie directed the Department of Corrections and the Department of Human Services to implement the first-ever dedicated, licensed substance use disorder treatment program at Mid-State Correctional Facility, which will be dedicated to treating addicts behind prison walls – a first-of-its-kind program in New Jersey. Governor Christie is investing \$2 million to re-open Mid-State Correctional Facility in 2017 as an institution dedicated to the treatment of inmates. The new Mid-State Correctional Facility substance use disorder treatment program will be licensed by the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

**JANUARY 2016: Made Historic Financial Commitment To Extend Access To Care For Substance Use Disorder Treatment:** Continuing his efforts to increase access to substance abuse treatment in the state, Governor Christie announced an a combined State and federal investment of over \$127 million in fiscal 2017 which will increase mental health and substance use treatment rates and expand access to care.

- o A \$127 million increase in rates for mental health and substance use treatment providers includes a new State investment of \$20 million as well as an increase of \$107 million in federal funding generated from new and existing State dollars in the system.
- o The \$127 million investment into increasing reimbursement to providers through enhanced rates is comprised of **\$53 million** for mental health services and **\$74 million** towards substance use services.
- o Rates will vary by service, but overall the new rates are expected to increase reimbursement by about 20 percent and in some cases as much as 50 percent. This represents a significant reinvestment of state savings and federal funds, and the largest increase overall to this community in over a decade.
- o These increased reimbursement rates will help improve critical services and provide more treatment capacity for those who need it most.

**JANUARY 2016: Expanded The Recovery Coaches Program:** Seeking to expand the available support for overdose victims first announced following the "Facing Addiction Task Force," Governor Christie announced \$1.7 million in funding to expand the Recovery Coach Program into six additional counties, for a total of 11 counties and \$3 million. Each county program is expected to serve 300 people annually. Although the program is in its early stages, more than 75 people whose overdose was reversed have already received the specialists' services.

- 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. In early 2017, one more county is expected to come online.
- As of October 2016, there were 868 reversals seen in the Emergency Departments by the Recovery Coaches and 362 or 42 percent accessed treatment.

**MARCH 2016: Reaffirmed Commitment To Reclaiming Lives And Providing Second Chances:** Reaffirming a commitment to second chances for individuals to reclaim their lives, Governor Chris Christie attended a new 50-bed residential treatment facility for male clients who are in New Jersey's Drug Court program. The Governor participated in the ribbon-cutting ceremony at Paterson's Straight & Narrow Inc. after meeting with clients whose lives have been turned around through the initiative.

**APRIL 2016: Expanded of Behavioral Health Homes:** Continuing the Administration's commitment to helping people with addiction with access to treatment and recovery services, Governor Chris Christie today announced the expansion of the behavioral health home model, a healthcare hub, that treats physical health, mental health and substance abuse with an integrated approach. Governor Christie made the announcement during his visit to Catholic Charities in Trenton, one of three behavioral health homes in Mercer County. Currently, there are four behavioral health homes statewide and seven new agencies advancing towards certification.

**APRIL 2016: Expanded NJPMP:** Governor Christie announced that New York will become the seventh state to partner with New Jersey's Prescription Monitoring Program, which allows participating states to share records on the sale of prescriptions for Controlled Dangerous Substances (CDS).

**JULY 2016: Led Governors' In Advocacy:** Governor Christie and 45 other governors signed the National Governors Association's Compact to Fight Opioid Addiction, in which they pledge to redouble their efforts to raise awareness of opioids and addiction, reduce inappropriate prescribing of painkillers and facilitate treatment and recovery for those already addicted.

**AUGUST 2016: Enhanced Programs With Federal Funding:** Governor Chris Christie announced The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has awarded the New Jersey Department of Health (DOH) a \$727,688 competitive grant to enhance efforts to curb the opioid crisis through a series of initiatives and the New Jersey Department of Human Services (DHS) approximately \$6.9 million to target prescription and opioid misuse. The CDC's Prescription Drug Overdose Prevention grant helps states combat ongoing prescription drug overdose challenges. The purpose is to provide state health departments with resources and support needed to advance interventions for preventing prescription drug overdoses.

**SEPTEMBER 2016: Protected People Against Deadly Knockoffs:** Governor Christie announced that Attorney General Christopher Porrino has 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.

**SEPTEMBER 2016: Expanded Recovery Coach Program:** Governor Christie announced the Recovery Coach Program will be expanded into six more counties – Atlantic, Bergen, Burlington, Hudson, Gloucester and Middlesex

**OCTOBER 2016: Created First-Responder Recovery Program:** Governor Christie signs bipartisan legislation establishing law enforcement-assisted addiction and recovery programs with the goal of making law enforcement officers, who are often the first to encounter persons suffering from substance use disorder, points of access for help and recovery.

**DECEMBER 2016: Expanded Prescription Drop-Off Locations To Protect Children:** Governor Christie helped Walgreens promote the launch of its safe medication disposal kiosk program in New Jersey with the installation of drug take-back kiosks at 16 Walgreens drugstores in New Jersey.

**JANUARY 2017: Expanded Treatment Beds for 18 and 19 Year Olds:** New Jersey regulations do not allow state-licensed youth treatment facilities to treat 18 or 19 year-olds. During the 2017 State of the State Address, Governor Christie instructed the Department of Children and Families to expand its residential services for teenagers who are struggling with substance abuse and who previously have been served in the adult system. This \$12 million investment will open nearly 200 beds to young people seeking help and ensure that those in recovery are appropriately served in a system with peers.

**JANUARY 2017: Improved Education:** In his 2017 State of the State Address, Governor Christie announced that the Acting Commissioner of Education will adopt a model curriculum specific to opioids so that every school has access to comprehensive opioid-inclusive drug education. Also, Corrections Commissioner Gary Lanigan will 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.

**JANUARY 2017: Increased Options For New Jerseyans Seeking Substance-Free Housing:** To continue our support of college students who have been caught in the addiction epidemic, Governor Christie announced increased support of college "recovery dorms" by \$1 million for counseling and additional services to help in the life-long battle to maintain sobriety. In addition, the Governor called on the legislature to ease overly restrictive statutory, regulatory and code hurdles for residences that provide supportive and substance-free housing in our communities. The Governor is also advocating for more Sober Living Homes to provide a safe haven to help those in recovery to become productive members of society.

**JANUARY 2017: Expanded Access To Substance Use Disorder Treatment:** People seeking treatment for this fatal disease must not be denied access in their time of need waiting for an insurance carrier's approval. The Governor called on legislative leadership to expeditiously pass legislation this month to ensure people cannot be denied coverage by their health insurance provider for the first six months of drug rehabilitation treatment.

**JANUARY 2017: Expanded The Pediatric Behavioral Health Collaborative:** Governor Christie 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 can call a specialist for an immediate consultation and referral source while children and their parents are in the office.

**JANUARY 2017: Increased Prevention Efforts:** Governor Christie directed the Attorney General's office to use emergency rule-making and other regulatory reform to reduce from 30 days the supply of opioid-based pain medications that physicians, dentists and other licensed health care providers prescribe to patients presenting with acute pain. Limiting the supply of opioid based pain medication is one step that must be taken to prevent addiction before it starts.

**JANUARY 2017: Urged The Federal Government to Facilitate More Treatment:** Maximizing drug treatment in New Jersey means enlisting the help of the federal government to help allow states to treat addiction in a more efficient and cost-effective manner. Federal Medicaid funds cannot currently be used for people who are receiving inpatient substance abuse treatment in a facility with more than 16 beds, because such facilities are categorized as "Institutions for Mental Diseases." Governor Christie called on Acting Human Services Commissioner Beth Connelly to work with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Administrator and the US Congress to lead the fight in removing this antiquated limitation that would allow New Jersey to double the amount of Medicaid beds that could be used for treatment and lead to recovery.

**JANUARY 2017: Declared Opioid Drug Abuse a Public Health Crisis:** 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. The action requires the marshalling of all appropriate resources to combat the harmful effects of opioid abuse on state citizens. The new Executive Order creates the Governor's Task Force on Drug Abuse Control, to be headed by Charlie McKenna, Executive Director of the New Jersey Schools Development Authority, which will be charged with developing and executing 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. The Drug Abuse Task Force will consist of eight members, including the Attorney General and the Commissioners of Health, Human Services, Corrections, Education, Children and Families, and Banking and Insurance. This Task Force will review current statutes and regulations that present barriers to individuals suffering from addiction to receiving treatment and make recommendations to rescind or amend any such statutes or regulations to remove those barriers. The panel is authorized to call upon any department, office, division, or agency of this state to supply it with information, personnel, or other assistance available as the Task Force deems necessary to discharge its duties. Members may consult with experts or other knowledgeable individuals in the public or private sector on any aspect of its mission. This Executive Order also directs 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. The Order further directs Department of Children and Families Commissioner Allison Blake to ensure residential substance abuse disease treatment facilities and similar facilities utilize their existing spaces effectively, including ensuring that 18 and 19-year-olds with substance abuse problems are able to take advantage of any vacancies in existing facilities wherever appropriate. In addition, the Governor is directing Acting Education Commissioner Kimberley Harrington to develop a new, comprehensive grade-specific curriculum to educate children about the dangers of substance abuse.

**JANUARY 2017: Expanded Behavioral Health Beds:** Continuing his effort to create the most aggressive response in the country to the opioid crisis, Governor Christie announced the State will increase the number of available beds for the treatment of behavioral health and substance abuse disorders by almost 40 percent. The Department of Health has filed a Certificate of Need Call (CN) for new adult acute care psychiatric beds throughout the Garden State, the first such CN in almost 20 years. The Department of Health CN calls for an additional 864 beds to treat those co-diagnosed for behavioral health and substance abuse treatment, which is an almost 40 percent increase in the total adult acute care psychiatric beds currently available in the State. These beds will serve Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Hunterdon, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Salem, Sussex and Warren counties. The additional beds must be operational within 2 years and up to 5 percent of the beds must be used for Medicaid and uninsured patients.

**FEBRUARY 2017: Signed Life-Saving Drug Addiction Reform, Ensuring Immediate Covered Treatment:** Governor Chris Christie signed into law, S-3/A-3, his life-saving healthcare reform to guarantee insurance coverage for people to access immediate drug addiction treatment and to limit initial opioid prescriptions. Governor Christie announced America's strongest addiction recovery reform during his 2017 State of the State address, and it was passed in a month by the legislature. This new law, S-3/A-3, makes New Jersey the only state in which people with insurance are guaranteed coverage and cannot be retroactively charged for six months of necessary addiction treatment, and it establishes in New Jersey the country's strongest maximum limit of five days' worth of prescribed opioid pills to keep them out of the hands of children and the vulnerable.

**MARCH 2017: Announced Gateway Foundation to Provide Substance Use Disorder Treatment Services:** Governor Chris Christie announced the Gateway Foundation will provide treatment services when Mid-State Correctional Facility reopens as a drug treatment center for New Jersey prison inmates. The Department of Corrections (NJDOC) in cooperation with the Department of Human Services will reopen Mid-State with services being provided for an initial term of five years by the Gateway Foundation, an organization with more than 40 years of experience in substance abuse treatment and counseling, including residential substance use psychoeducational programming at six NJDOC facilities. As an additional component of this contract, the Gateway Foundation will continue to provide psychoeducational programming at all 13 NJDOC correctional facilities and provide substance use disorder (SUD) treatment services at Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women. Gateway will offer a range of

treatment individualized to the needs of each inmate, with a focus on providing treatment for offenders with substance use disorders involving alcohol and/or drugs.

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