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Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Announces Over \$1.6 Million in County Innovation Grants to Combat the Opioid Epidemic

02/4/2020

Governor Also Relaunches Reach NJ Public Service Initiative to Encourage Residents to Seek Help for Addiction

BAYVILLE – Recognizing the continued public health crisis of opioid addiction in our communities, Governor Phil Murphy today reiterated his Administration’s commitment to combating the opioid epidemic during a roundtable with individuals in recovery and health professionals at Ocean Mental Health Services in Bayville. Preliminary overdose death data for January 2020 show that suspected drug-related deaths have decreased 2.8 percent from December 2019, an overall downward trend since November 2019, resulting in 280 lives lost just last month.

“These numbers are a reminder we must stay vigilant in our work,” **said Governor Murphy.** “Each resident lost to the epidemic is a loved one gone too soon. This crisis requires us to pursue smart and compassionate policies laser-focused on solutions – increased availability of medication-assisted treatment, greater access to Naloxone, education and outreach to residents in need, and enhanced social supports for those on the path to and working to maintain their recovery, like housing and employment services.”

The Governor and cabinet members highlighted the Administration’s comprehensive, multi-pronged effort to combat the opioid epidemic – including increasing access to evidence-based prevention and treatment programs, supporting individuals on their path to and maintenance of recovery, supporting data-driven work and strengthening system-wide infrastructure, and using robust law enforcement to stem the supply of illicit drugs – to advance the statewide response to the opioid crisis.

Governor Murphy also announced \$1.67 million in *County Innovation Awards to Address the Opioid Epidemic*, which is the first disbursement of a \$3 million county-based innovation grant award program supported by \$100 million in funding through Fiscal Year 2020 budget. This funding, distributed through the Department of Human Services, provides local leaders the opportunity to fund innovative projects that reflect the needs of their communities in addressing the opioid epidemic, including areas such as opioid use disorder prevention, treatment, and recovery.

The twelve awardees are:

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County	Grant Amount	Program Description
Burlington	\$134,615	Supporting the development of a resource recovery center with a focus on peer supports
Camden	\$190,039	Expanding access to medication assisted treatment for opioid use disorder
Cape May	\$35,751	Launching a peer recovery center
Cumberland	\$71,777	Supporting early intervention and recovery supports
Hudson	\$203,963	Building recovery supports for youth and young adults
Mercer	\$140,000	Expanding access to medication assisted treatment for opioid use disorder
Monmouth	\$226,366	Creating peer supports to engage people in treatment and recovery
Morris	\$151,505	Intervening with individuals with opioid use disorder in pre-trial diversion
Ocean	\$229,936	Targeting stigma through education and building recovery supports including focusing on the role of transportation in accessing treatment
Salem	\$24,795	Create recovery coach services to build community connections for individuals with opioid use disorder
Somerset	\$94,967	Supporting pregnant women/new moms with substance use disorder through a focus on wellness
Union	\$170,574	Leveraging the county's community needs assessment to fill identified gaps in social services for individuals with opioid use disorder

Additionally, Governor Murphy announced the relaunch of *Reach NJ*, a public service initiative managed by the Department of Human Services, to encourage people to seek help for addiction, with messaging based on input from individuals in recovery and families of individuals with addiction. Please visit <https://reachnj.gov/> (<https://reachnj.gov/>) for more information about the initiative.

At the roundtable discussion, New Jersey Human Services Commissioner Carole Johnson also announced that to date more than 53,000 free doses of Narcan, the lifesaving antidote naloxone, have been distributed to approximately 424 police departments statewide, as well as approximately 400 free doses of naloxone to the staff of New Jersey public libraries.

“The Department of Human Services is committed to working with local leaders to turn the tide of the opioid epidemic,” **said New Jersey Department of Human Services Commissioner Carole Johnson**. “Today, we are announcing new awards that will support local innovative projects that were designed by and reflect the needs of local communities in combatting this public health challenge. We’re also helping local first responders get the tools they need to save lives by putting free naloxone into the hands of tens of thousands

of police officers. And, we're recognizing the community leadership role of public libraries by giving naloxone for free to librarians. We also upgraded our 1-844-ReachNJ addiction treatment hotline to ensure immediate connection to addiction counselors and redesigned our messaging to reflect the input of individuals in recovery and families of individuals with addiction. We believe community voices and actions are essential to fighting this epidemic, and today we're demonstrating that through our investment in local solutions. Treatment works and recovery is possible, and the goal of the Murphy Administration is to save lives."

"We cannot afford to lose momentum in the fight to end the opioid epidemic. We must continue working with our partners across agencies to attack this crisis from all sides," **said Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal**. "Together we must double down on our efforts to fight addiction through prevention, treatment, and enforcement."

"The Department of Health is committed to linking all those in need to treatment and services by engaging healthcare providers, harm reduction centers, local health officials and emergency care providers in the fight to save lives," **said New Jersey Department of Health Commissioner Judith M. Persichilli**. "The Department will continue to work to prevent addiction before it starts, help keep individuals with substance use disorder healthy and assist them on a path to recovery."

"In partnership with the Murphy Administration, we are doing our part to address the scourge of opioids through our Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) program," **said New Jersey Department of Corrections Commissioner Marcus O. Hicks, Esq.** "Paired with behavioral therapy and a continuum of services post-release, MAT is part of our arsenal of tools that support successful reentry, recidivism reductions, and contributes to the state's safety."

"Opioid addiction is always bigger than one person. It impacts everyone who loves and cares for him or her and it definitely impacts a family's ability to stay safe, healthy and connected," **said New Jersey Department of Children and Families Commissioner Christine Norbut Beyer**. "As we develop our State's plans to support individuals in recovery, we must also extend that support to the family that has been destabilized by the individual's opioid or substance use disorder. Throughout DCF, we are committed to doing everything we can to safeguard and nurture the family unit, to protect and preserve family connections and to give New Jersey residents challenged by addiction the motivation and assistance they need to achieve and maintain recovery."

"We know from research that lack of employment is an impediment to long-term recovery," **said New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo**. "People are more likely to remain in recovery if they believe they can find success in the workplace, which provides a sense of security and self-respect. That's why we've been working hard to offer the stability of steady employment."

"As a recovery coach, I've seen firsthand how opioid abuse can destroy a person's health and happiness, and in the most tragic cases, result in death. I've also seen that recovery is possible with the right support," **said Assemblyman John Armato**. "We are committed to fighting this epidemic with every tool in our arsenal, starting with our voices. Today we renewed New Jersey's commitment to ending this crisis once and for all, and ensuring that our state is creating second chances for those in recovery to be successful."

"The opioid epidemic has impacted every family throughout New Jersey," **said Senator Sam Thompson**. "While I am proud the State has stepped up with more funding and resources to combat addiction, there is much more work to be done. I am encouraged by today's roundtable discussion, and I hope we can continue to work together in a bipartisan fashion to find solutions to tackle this crisis from many angles."

To learn more about the Administration's work to combat the opioid epidemic, click here (https://nj.gov/governor/news/news/562020/docs/Opioid_Programs.pdf).

Governor Phil Murphy

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