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Gov. Christie: The Biggest Goal Of This Commission Is To Bring Addiction Out Of The Shadows And Into The Light

Friday, June 16, 2017 Tags: [Addiction Taskforce](#)



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Transcript:

Governor Christie: I find in our state and when I've traveled around the country that the biggest problem we have is what Dr. Renner said about stigma. You know, all of these other diseases that we talked about that we've analogized here and you have as well all have human conduct contributions to them as well. Whether you're talking about cancer or heart disease or diabetes, all of them have human conduct contributions to them yet, we have moved in our society to a place where we don't shoot the victim in that regard and we say okay what can we do to help you now that you find yourself in the circumstance. We've done it completely differently when it comes to this disease and so much of this is going to be about us speaking out very strongly about the fact that this is a disease that can be treated and that it is not a moral failing. And I use this analogy all the time and will end with this today. My mother was an addict, my mother was addicted to nicotine and she started smoking when she was 16 years old and by the time she was 30 the Surgeon General reports had come out, she knew it was killing her, and she continued to smoke for 55 years. And at 71 years old when she was inevitably it seemed to me, diagnosed with lung cancer, and died two and a half months later. During that intervening period of time no one ever came to me and said well Chris she smoked for 55 years she got what she deserved, she made a choice, and an informed choice. No, everybody came and said here's a doctor she could go to, here's a new clinical trial that she could do, here's a support group for your family, and we just want to pray for her and have her get better. And I never had any problem telling anyone that my mother was suffering from lung cancer, wasn't a point of shame for me even though her conduct had given her that disease. Now I just wonder if I had felt that way if she was a heroin addict, and I suspect that I wouldn't have because we think somehow that reflects upon us as a father or a mother, as a brother or a sister, as a son or daughter. Only way for us to get people to access all these great treatments that we're talking about, all this great education is to get parents to be talking about it to get friends to be trying to help friends who they suspect may have a problem. And I think the biggest goal of this commission is to bring this up out of the shadows and into the light because if we do, and you all are the experts around the country you're right about this that there are the treatments available that we know the answers, well then all we need to do is to get people to be willing to accept them and not just when it's too late to accept them. So I want to thank everybody who's here today, I appreciate it very very much. I can tell you the President cares deeply about this issue and that he is prepared to involve himself directly and personally in trying to help to lift the stigma across the country. He understands it well and personally and I know that he will work with us on this. We'll be back in touch with you by writing and maybe in another meeting as well, and I want to thank the other members of the commission for being here today, the Governors, Cooper and Baker, Professor Madras, and Congressman Kennedy. Thank you all for being here and everyone travel home safely on Friday.

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