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Governor Christie: We Need As A Community To Start Marching And Own The Opioid Issue

Thursday, May 25, 2017

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Governor Christie: We Need As A Community To Start Marching A...

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Transcript:

Governor Christie: Because we've never seen an epidemic with as much intensity as we're now experiencing with the scourge of drug addiction, it's our nation's single biggest public health crisis. Now you say is that really true. It's a nice statement for a politician to make. Is it really true? Let me tell you that last year, to supplement the numbers that Dan gave, 52,000 people in this country died of a drug overdose. 52,000 that is more than every gun homicide and every automobile accident in this country combined. It is more than the number of people who died from HIV/AIDS at the height of the epidemic in the mid-1980s. What I want to know is where the marches? I live through the HIV/AIDS crisis as many of you in this room did and you remember the marches all across this country on Washington and on other states capitals demanding that the government do something to help find a treatment for a disease that was killing so many of our citizens. But let's go back a little further than that because that's where we are right now on this problem and this public health crisis. Remember when HIV/AIDS was just the gay plague. Remember when HIV/AIDS was seen in this country as something we didn't talk about. Remember when HIV/AIDS had a stigma about it that made people turn their heads and look the other way and make people believe that on some level the people who are getting this disease deserved it. And that there was nothing that we needed to do about it. What changed all that? As I remember it what changed all that was the day that Magic Johnson stood up and said he had AIDS. And America said, wait a second, that's a hero. It's a hero who has this disease. Now what do we do? Now we can't stigmatize this anymore? We can't put his poster on our child's bedroom wall and say that he's undeserving of care and treatment. And I really do that believe that in large measure, Magic Johnson's revelation that he had the HIV virus changed the attitude of many, many Americans and led to the President at the time and others putting an increased amount of

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resources and effort and attention on developing not a cure because we still don't have one but today, 30 years HIV/AIDS is no longer a death sentence. HIV/AIDS is something that people can live with and be treated through an entire array of medications that have been developed in that 30 year period of time. Question for us now is: are going to wait 30 years to save the 52,000 a year who are dying of this disease and what are going to do about the stigma? We need as a community to start marching, we need as a community to own this issue. And we got to break some china in the process everybody. My guess is, that's why the President brought me in.

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