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ICYMI: In opioid crisis, Christie provides weapons for war against addiction

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Tags: [Addiction Taskforce](#)

In Case You Missed It

In opioid crisis, Christie provides weapons for war against addiction

- Robert J. Budsock

In opioid crisis, Christie provides weapons for war against addiction

Robert J. Budsock serves as president and CEO of Integrity House

Star-Ledger

On Sept. 19, Gov. Chris Christie visited Integrity House in Newark to discuss new major initiatives to combat the opioid crisis. The governor will commit \$200 million toward 25 recovery and prevention initiatives that will make New Jersey the model for nationwide addiction recovery programs.

The opioid epidemic is a national and state emergency that calls for immediate and drastic interventions, which is why we applaud the governor's efforts to ensure a more comprehensive system of treatment, prevention and education. His proposals aim to increase treatment accessibility for those seeking help and resources for proper addiction treatment.

Addiction does not discriminate. It affects all people regardless of their job, age, race, gender or socioeconomic status.

The governor's proposals offer a broad spectrum of services for each unique challenge that addiction may present by including:

- Funds dedicated to a recovery pilot program for those on Medicaid or those who are uninsured who need inpatient treatment.

- A recovery-coach program to link recovery coaches to people in treatment.

- An expanded supportive housing program for those looking to stabilize once sober.

- On-campus recovery programs for students in recovery.

- A program to improve outcomes for pregnant women dependent on opioids.

- A program to support individuals being released from prison who rely on medication-assisted treatment.

The newest addiction initiatives proposed by Christie will also aim to improve recovery and overdose training for health care and corrections staff. There is an education program proposed for obstetricians dealing with babies born with neonatal abstinence syndrome, a program proposed to educate and prepare individuals to become certified alcohol and drug counselors, money dedicated to strengthening laboratories, technology and staff resources to advance toxicology testing, and a proposed workshop training program for Department of Corrections staff members to ensure they are well-versed in treatment, drug diversion and confidentiality.

I am hopeful that under the governor's plan, accessibility to treatment services will increase for those who have fallen victim to the substance-use disorder epidemic plaguing our communities. Make no mistake: Addiction is a complex problem that demands a multifaceted, multidisciplinary solution. There isn't a quick fix for the disease of addiction, and although recovery is possible, it is a lifelong commitment.

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Although the end of the governor's tenure is near, he remains deeply committed to helping communities battle the opioid epidemic and continues to reinforce that, through effective treatment, addiction is a recoverable disease. Christie has made a number of sweeping moves to combat New Jersey's opioid-addiction crisis. His final push, committing \$200 million to a robust prevention and recovery initiative program, marks some of the greatest hope we have for the fight against the ongoing opioid crisis.

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