

Governor Phil Murphy

ICYMI: Murphy Administration Announces Pilot Program to Assist Children and Families Affected by Addiction

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TRENTON – Acting Attorney General Matthew J. Platkin, Department of Children and Families Commissioner Christine Norbut Beyer, and Department of Human Services Commissioner Sarah Adelman announced the launch of a new pilot program to train law enforcement officers and community stakeholders on how to recognize and interact with children and families affected by addiction and connect them with systems of care.

The program, known as the Child Trauma Response Initiative, will launch in three pilot municipalities across the state, which were identified based on an assessment of their need and existing resources:

- Asbury Park (Monmouth County)
- Millville (Cumberland County)
- Plainfield (Union County)

The Child Trauma Response Initiative, which is being paid for with \$2 million in opioid settlement funds, will be administered under the Office of the New Jersey Coordinator for Addiction Responses and Enforcement Strategies ("NJ CARES"), within the Department of Law and Public Safety, in coordination with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the Department of Human Services (DHS). The goal of the program is to give law enforcement and community stakeholders the necessary tools to identify families – and particularly children – impacted by addiction during opioid related incidents and then link children and caregivers to the services they need in an effort to engage them in successful treatment and sustained recovery.

"Tragically, our youth are not immune to the effects of the ongoing opioid crisis. Too many children in our state have been impacted in some way by the struggles of their loved ones facing addiction," said **Governor Phil Murphy**. "Connecting New Jersey children with the support they need to process these difficult experiences is a critical component of our ongoing efforts to address and mitigate the harms of this nationwide epidemic."

"Among those hardest hit by the addiction epidemic are the children who experience trauma as the result of a parent or caregiver's substance misuse. Sadly, this suffering is often overlooked," said **Acting Attorney General Platkin**. "By recognizing these hidden victims of addiction and intervening to help them and their families get the assistance they need, law enforcement can play a key role in reversing the long-lasting and destructive ripple effects of the opioid crisis."

"About a third of children who enter foster care in New Jersey have a parent suffering from substance use. Historically, child welfare systems have taken an unforgiving and punitive approach with families impacted by substance use disorder," said **DCF Commissioner Christine Norbut Beyer**. "We want to change that. We know that a parent struggling with addiction doesn't love their child any less—they just need access to supports and resources in their community. This pilot demonstrates the state's commitment to engaging families through a healing-centered lens, in an effort to reduce childhood trauma and keep families together."

"The children and families of those impacted by substance misuse often face their own unique struggles, which are often overlooked even though the impact can last a lifetime," said **DHS Commissioner Sarah Adelman**. "This pilot program is an important step to assist and support children and families so they can find healing and move forward successfully. I look forward to working with our partners to connect affected children and families with the vital services they need."

"The program announced today will help ensure that community members most often in contact with families impacted by addiction – including law enforcement officers – are trained to recognize the signs of a family in crisis and know what programs and services are available to assist," said **Kelly Levy, Acting Director of NJ CARES**. "We will continue to find innovative and impactful ways to use opioid settlement funds to bolster the resiliency of communities harmed by the unlawful conduct of drug manufacturers and others."

Initial funding for the Child Trauma Response Initiative comes from a settlement with global consulting firm McKinsey & Company that resolved an investigation into the company's role in fueling the opioid epidemic by designing aggressive marketing strategies used by some of the nation's largest opioid manufacturers, including Purdue Pharma. The State of New Jersey will receive approximately \$16 million under that multistate settlement valued at \$573 million total.

The Child Trauma Response Initiative will forge a partnership among law enforcement, state agencies, and community providers that will utilize existing addiction and recovery services and programs to provide support and assistance to children and families who are experiencing emotional or behavioral crises as a result of addiction. The Child Trauma Response Initiative partnership will also address gaps in existing systems of care within the community to strengthen the safety net for children and families.

Under the program, law enforcement and community stakeholders will be trained to identify the need to link families to services as a result of addiction in situations, such as when:

- A parent or other adult member of a child's household has overdosed
- A parent or other adult member of a child's household has been arrested on drug-related charges
- Law enforcement has responded to a domestic incident involving children, where drugs were involved

The Child Trauma Response Initiative program will train law enforcement officers to recognize circumstances that often occur in these conditions that may be traumatic to children, and to link the family members to appropriate services that will provide them with support to heal from the trauma of the event and successfully recover.

"The Asbury Park Police Department is looking forward to participating in this very important initiative. We all know the impact opiate addiction has on adults, but can sometimes overlook the adverse effects it has on our children. This valuable training is an additional resource our officers have to utilize in connecting children and families to much needed services," said **Sergeant Michael Casey, public information officer for the Asbury Park Police**. "This initiative is yet another example of law enforcement agencies trying to improve the relationships with the communities in which they serve."

"I believe this initiative will have an incredibly positive impact in our community by connecting children and their families to services available," said **Millville Police Chief Jody Farabella**. "The Millville Police Department is looking forward to having additional training to help interact with children that have been impacted by opioid related incidents."

"The Plainfield Police Department fully supports the Childhood Trauma Response Initiative," said **Plainfield Police Director James T. Abney**. "Adverse Childhood Experiences directly impact communities such as Plainfield, and we commend the efforts of the Attorney General's Office to address this important issue."

The Child Trauma Response Initiative is the latest initiative from the Office of the Attorney General aimed at strengthening trust between law enforcement and historically marginalized communities, and training police to serve as a lifeline to connect individuals in crisis to care and treatment instead of funneling them into the criminal justice system.

NJ CARES will hire a full-time individual that can act as a Project Manager to oversee, implement, and evaluate the CTRI. NJ CARES is now accepting applications for the position. For more information and how to apply click here (<https://www.dice.com/jobs/detail/470a208ca77b8e3277dfceae81a95c07>)
searchlink=search%2F%3Fq%3DLead%2520Trainer%2520%26location%3DHamilton%2C%2520NJ%252008629%2C%2520USA%26latitude%3D40.2242807%26longitude%3D-74.7249281%26countryCode%3DUS%26locationPrecision%3DPostalCode%26radius%3D30%26radiusUnit%3Dmi%26page%3D1%26pageSize%3D20%26language%3Den%26eid%3DS20a3d3-4ad2-8c8b-b35e4bb84014).

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