

## Reclaiming Lives

### *Governor Christie Signs Legislation Providing Stronger Tools To Help Prevent Drug Abuse*

Today Governor Christie signed legislation to enhance the State's Project Medicine Drop program and to strengthen the Attorney General's law enforcement coordination efforts against opioid drug abuse. These measures include:

- **Expanding Project Medicine Drop.** Expands the Department of Law & Public Safety's (L&PS) existing Project Medicine Drop program, and provides for future expansion of the program at the funding discretion of the Department.
- **Refine New Jersey's Law Enforcement Coordination, Training, And Prescription Drug Oversight Efforts.** Strengthens the Attorney General's ability to coordinate statewide law enforcement efforts against opioid abuse in the Garden State. These coordination activities include the Division of Consumer Affairs and professional licensing boards in identifying, investigating, and prosecuting the illegal sources and distribution of prescription opioid drugs; taking appropriate steps to enhance the oversight by professional licensing boards; and providing training to law enforcement officials, physicians, and pharmacists.

Since the start of his administration, Governor Christie has placed a spotlight on changing the conversation on drug addiction and focusing on treatment for those struggling with addiction.

### Ending The Stigma Through The Facing Addiction Task Force:

In September 2014, Governor Christie and Pastor Joe A. Carter of Newark's New Hope Baptist Church hosted a summit on drug addiction. The event acted as a call to action and conversation – bringing together public leaders, treatment professionals and advocates, and survivors of drug addiction – focused on ending the stigma around drug addiction and treatment.

The following month, Governor Christie created the Facing Addiction Task Force, a 12-member team of leaders and experts from inside and outside of government chaired by Pastor Joe Carter and co-chaired by former Governor Jim McGreevey to fight addiction through treatment and prevention.

### One-Stop Access To Help Ex-Offenders Battling Drug Addiction:

In this year's State of the State Address, Governor Christie announced the first initiative to be implemented under the Task Force's guidance: A groundbreaking one-stop model for connecting comprehensive services to ex-offenders re-entering society.

Based on the principle of Integrated Reintegration, the Governor announced a program designed to streamline services available to ex-offenders to ensure they receive the kind of support they need to reclaim their lives and eventually move off government services and into the workplace.

By significantly building the ex-offenders' capacity to become self-sufficient, and connecting them directly to coordinated services during the critically important period as they leave prison or drug court, the program strengthens their reintegration into the community as well as reduces long-term service costs to the State. Services involved include addiction treatment, housing, and employment services.

The program will follow the Jersey City Employment and Training Program model – which has been hailed

as a “national model” and “at the forefront of the reentry field” and coordinated by the New Jersey Reentry Corporation (NJRC). The cities and counties participating in the program include:

- Newark / Essex County
- Paterson / Passaic County
- Atlantic City / Atlantic County
- Toms River / Ocean County
- Trenton / Mercer County
- Jersey City / Hudson County

## **ENDING THE FAILED WAR ON DRUGS BY PUTTING TREATMENT FIRST**

### **A Statewide Expansion Of Drug Court:**

Governor Christie has followed through on his commitment to take a smarter and more effective approach focused on treating drug-addicted offenders by signing into law landmark, bipartisan legislation to put in place a state-wide, mandatory drug court program. The legislation acts on Governor Christie’s belief that no life is disposable and that it is a commonsense and moral imperative to help individuals dealing with drug addiction reclaim their lives with treatment, rather than warehousing them in prison.

- The law calls for a five-year phase in period, during which the capacity of the state's drug courts will be expanded and the effectiveness of the effort will be measured.

Governor Christie is further acting on his commitment by increasing funding by ***\$8.5 million*** for drug court expansion and treatment in the Fiscal Year 2016 budget.

- This additional funding permits the Department of Human Services to expand treatment to approximately 1,000 clients in both inpatient and outpatient facilities, providing the capacity needed to continue drug court expansion.

**Drug Court Will Help New Jerseyans Turn Their Lives Around:** The rate at which drug court graduates are re-arrested for new offenses is 16% and the reconviction rate is 8%.

- This is compared to re-arrest rates for drug offenders released from prison that stand at 54% with a re-conviction rate of 43%.
- An average institutional cost per inmate is approximately \$38,900, whereas the cost for an active drug court participant is roughly \$11,379.

### **Providing a Comprehensive Referral Source for Addiction Services:**

This year, Governor Christie advances his efforts to take a smarter and more effective approach in how the State supports individuals with substance use disorders. The Fiscal Year 2016 budget provides ***\$2.3 million*** to create a single point of entry for individuals in crisis and their families.

- By moving away from fragmented treatment options, this newly-funded entity will improve the way the State delivers services to people with substance use disorders. Through this new management contract with Rutgers’ University Behavioral Health Care, individuals who are uninsured or on Medicaid with addiction disorders will be able to more effectively access available services and resources throughout the State.

### **Integrating Substance Abuse Treatment With Employment Services:**

Governor Christie is going further in helping those with drug addiction reclaim their lives in a permanent way, by taking the lead on an innovative initiative to integrate substance abuse treatment with

employment services like job training, skills acquisition, and job-search and placement resources.

- Research shows that integrating employment with substance abuse treatment helps secure participation in the treatment program and leads to lower rates of relapse.
- Leveraging a \$500,000 grant from the Nicholson Foundation is allowing the state to utilize up to \$500,000 in additional federal resources via the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) program, for which many Drug Court participants are eligible.

Altogether, the Christie Administration and partners are devoting up to **\$1 million** towards these integrated employment services.

#### **Expansion of Prescription Monitoring Program (NJMPMP) to Include Interstate Data-Sharing:**

In October 2014, Governor Christie announced that the New Jersey Prescription Monitoring Program (NJMPMP) expanded its interstate data-sharing capabilities to connect with the State of Delaware's Prescription Monitoring Program. In addition, New Jersey is in the process of building a similar partnership with the State of New York.

- Since the announced expansion, NJMPMP participation has grown from **41 percent to 59 percent**.
- In April 2015, New Jersey launched the first-in-the-nation online app that allows authorized users of the state's Prescription Monitoring Program access to the database via Apple smartphones and handheld devices.

### ***SAVING THE LIVES OF OVERDOSE VICTIMS***

#### **Signing Bipartisan Overdose Protection Act Into Law:**

In May 2013, fulfilling his commitment to emphasize drug rehabilitation efforts and his different approach to dealing with drug abuse and addiction, Governor Chris Christie signed the bipartisan Overdose Protection Act into law at a drug rehabilitation center in Paterson (P.L. 2013, c. 46.). The Governor was joined at the bill signing by Jon Bon Jovi, leading drug prevention advocates and family members of individuals lost to drug overdoses.

- The legislation takes a two-prong approach to help prevent drug overdose deaths in New Jersey. First, it provides legal protection to people who are in violation of the law while they are attempting to help a drug overdose victim. Secondly, it eliminates negative legal action against health care professionals or bystanders who administer overdose antidotes in life-threatening situations.

In February 2015, Governor Christie signed an expansion of the Overdose Prevention Act, adding a provision providing immunity to first responders who administer and dispense Narcan.

#### **Implementing A Statewide Program To Train And Equip First Responders To Save Lives:**

Governor Christie announced the statewide expansion of the successful pilot program to help reduce the number of heroin-related deaths by training and equipping police officers and first responders to administer the antidote Narcan to overdose victims.

- The Christie Administration has issued a waiver to more than 28,000 certified EMTs to allow them to administer Narcan, a medication used to treat drug overdose patients in emergency situations statewide.
- Since April 2014, nearly **900 lives** have been saved through this pilot program.

## ***HELPING NON-VIOLENT OFFENDERS RECLAIM THEIR LIVES***

### **Common-Sense Bail Reform To Bring Fairness For Non-Violent Offenders:**

Governor Christie signed bipartisan reforms to New Jersey's bail system that have been in the making for two and a half years. These reforms, along with an amendment to the State constitution approved by New Jersey voters on the November 2014 ballot, will keep dangerous individuals off the streets by allowing people charged with the most serious violent crimes to be held without bail.

- In addition, the reforms will make the bail system fairer by allowing those who commit minor, nonviolent offenses to have nonmonetary options instead of being confined to jail because they simply cannot afford even low bail amounts.

### **Helping Inmates Reclaim Their Lives By Attending College:**

Building on New Jersey's long record of innovative approaches to combating recidivism and Governor Christie's firm commitment to helping non-violent offenders reclaim their lives, a consortium of public and private universities across New Jersey are helping prison inmates attend college.

Led by Rutgers University, the New Jersey Scholarship and Transformative Education in Prisons Consortium (NJ-STEP) is providing access to college for qualified incarcerated students, while assisting in the transition to college life upon their release into the community.

- NJ-STEP is an innovative four-year program launched at the beginning of the 2012-13 academic year, through which prisoners in New Jersey correctional facilities can work towards the Associate and Baccalaureate degrees in Social Sciences while preparing to transition to full-time college enrollment.
- Currently, there are nearly 500 inmates participating in the program, in 6 of New Jersey's 13 State correctional facilities, with the aim of expanding over the next four years to serve 2,000 inmates in 10 facilities.
  - NJ-STEP institutions offer more than 178 classes across the facilities, and applicants for seats in classes exceeded capacity.
  - According to a May 2013 study, students admitted to Rutgers University under the STEP program perform as well or better than their peers, both academically and socially.

Funding for NJ-STEP is provided through a major, multi-year grant to Rutgers University from The Ford Foundation and The Sunshine Lady Foundation. The NJ-STEP Consortium schools work in partnership with the Department of Corrections and State Parole Board.

### **Building On New Jersey's Strong Record Of Combating Recidivism:**

In November 2011, taking action to build on the nationally recognized success of New Jersey's prisoner re-entry, rehabilitation and prevention programs, Governor Chris Christie outlined an initiative to help even more offenders get the support they need to successfully re-enter society, break the cycle of criminality and lead productive lives.

New Jersey is widely recognized as a national leader in reducing incidents of recidivism and reducing its prison population:

- The state's 11 percent recidivism decline is among the steepest declines of any state according to the Pew Center on the States' State of Recidivism report, "The Revolving Door of America's Prisons."

- Since 1999, New Jersey's prison population has declined more than 29 percent.