

Governor Christie Continues Commitment to Reclaiming Lives with Visit to Narcan Training Program

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Nearly 11,000 Deployments Of Narcan In Two Years Of Christie Administration's Statewide Narcan Program

Trenton, NJ – Embracing the view that Narcan opens the door to saving a life from the tragedy of overdose, Governor Chris Christie today visited the Morris County *Prevention is Key*-sponsored naloxone training at CarePoint Health Hoboken University Medical. The training teaches loved ones and friends of drug users how to administer the life-saving antidote.

"Narcan has saved thousands of lives in New Jersey, people who otherwise would have died of an overdose if someone hadn't been prepared and trained with the antidote," said Governor Christie. "While a successful reversal doesn't guarantee a life is saved, it does open the door. The real key to saving that life is getting the addicted person into treatment which my administration is working tirelessly to expand."

The Governor added, "One of the most important messages we can convey to those who have had an overdose reversed is that it's okay to ask for help –there are people who want to help you, many of whom have been in your shoes and know what you are experiencing. Do not be ashamed to seek assistance."

April marks the 2nd anniversary of New Jersey's Narcan program with thousands of law enforcement officers and EMTs now trained in its administration. Since 2014, there have been nearly 11,000 deployments of Narcan statewide.

Narcan training and distribution was encouraged in the bi-partisan Overdose Prevention Act signed by Governor Christie in May 2013. The law also grants immunity to most people reporting an overdose, as promoted in the "Don't Think Twice, Save a Life. Call 9-1-1 campaign." Governor Christie signed an expansion of the law to further protect first-responders, whether they are health professionals, law enforcement or EMTs who administer overdose antidotes in life-threatening situations.

"Our work to address this terrible epidemic started with the Overdose Prevention Act, but it hasn't ended there," said Senator Joseph Vitale. "Governor Christie and I continue to work in partnership to advance a multi-faceted comprehensive public health approach that includes prevention, education, treatment and recovery. We have accomplished many of those goals and continue to advance many more solutions.

Morris County Prevention is Key is among several providers throughout the state funded by the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services to provide the live-saving Narcan instruction. In addition to teaching how to administer the antidote, the trainings also provide information on overdose prevention strategies, overdose symptoms, rescue breathing and support services and opens the door to treatment.

From the time the regionalized \$675,000 Opioid Overdose Prevention Program (OOPP) began in November 2015 through the end of March 2016, 1,421 individuals have been trained to administer Narcan and 1,111 naloxone kits have been distributed during 131 DMHAS-funded trainings throughout the state.

A minimum of one training has been held or scheduled in every county thus far.

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More Information

Recovery Coaches and Patient Navigators engage individuals reversed from an opioid overdose to provide non-clinical assistance, recovery supports and appropriate referrals for assessment and substance use disorder treatment. They use their personal experiences and understanding of addiction to more easily and effectively establish a rapport with the patients who have experienced an overdose and subsequent Naloxone reversal. The peer is better able to gain the trust of the patient and motivate and encourage him or her to enter treatment for their opioid addiction. They also will maintain regular follow-up with these individuals and are often on call to respond to the needs of the patient.

Governor Christie has allocated \$1.3 million for Recovery Specialists at providers in four counties and has proposed \$1.7 million in the FY2017 budget to expand the program into six more counties

“Unfortunately, a close call with death is, in itself, often not enough to get someone into treatment,” said Department of Human Services Acting Commissioner Elizabeth Connolly, noting that some people are overcome by their addiction and go out and use opioids again within minutes of being reversed.

The acting commissioner applauded the governor’s commitment to addiction prevention and treatment and noted that DMHAS hopes to serve 300 people annually in each county in the Recovery Specialist program.

The link below, which is on the DMHAS website, provides information regarding opioid overdose prevention and the naloxone training:

<http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dmhas/initiatives/naloxone.html>

DMHAS will be supplementing this link with additional information as the licensed Opioid Treatment Programs (OTPs) continue scheduling and conducting trainings in the specific counties where their agencies are located.

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