

# The Many Faces of Addiction: Ending the Stigma

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## Reclaiming Lives

*Governor Christie Is Changing The Conversation On Drug Addiction And Focusing On Treatment For Those Struggling With Addiction*

*"The way I really thought about this over the last number of months is as a father of four children, there, but for the grace of God, go I. And drug abuse and addiction is a disease and it can happen to anyone of us from anywhere in this state. There are no exceptions. And it is not uncommon for many of us to know a family member, a friend, a neighbor, someone else close to us who has struggled with addiction. And if we have the ability to prevent a loss, to prevent an unthinkable tragedy, by providing the tools for people to help save their own lives, then I believe we should be involved."*

– Governor Chris Christie, Signing of the Overdose Prevention Act, May 2, 2013

## 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.

- Following the program's enactment, mandatory drug courts were established in Hudson, Ocean and the region including Somerset, Hunterdon and Warren counties.
  - In 2014 the program will be expanded to the following areas: Atlantic and Cape May, Passaic and Mercer.
- 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.

*In fiscal year 2015, Governor Christie further acts on his commitment by increasing funding by \$4.5 million for drug court expansion and treatment.*

- This additional funding will permit 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%.
- According to that report, an average institutional cost per inmate is approximately \$38,900, whereas the cost for an active drug court participant is roughly \$11,379.

#### 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, will allow 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, in fiscal year 2015, the Christie Administration and partners will devote **\$1 million** towards these integrated employment services.

### ***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 (S2082) into law at a drug rehabilitation center in Paterson. 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.

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

Governor Christie announced the statewide expansion of the successful pilot program that was launched in Ocean and Monmouth counties earlier this year 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.

- **"Gives The Green Light To EMTs Across The State And Will Save Lives":**
  - **Ocean County Prosecutor Joseph D. Coronato:** "It's all about saving lives and the need for all police departments to have their officers trained to administer Narcan." (Stephanie Loder, "Seaside Heights administers first lifesaving dose of Narcan in Ocean County," [Asbury Park Press](#), 4/11/14)
  - **Ocean County Prosecutor's Office spokesman Al Della Fave:** "Plain and simple, for some folks it's a second chance they can make good on ..." (Dustin Racioppi, "Three Heroin Saves In 12 Hours In Toms River," [Asbury Park Press](#), 5/23/14)
  - **Health Commissioner Mary E. O'Dowd:** "Every minute counts in an emergency overdose situation so having first responders carry and administer this medication may mean the difference between life and death ..." ("Christie Administration Grants Waiver For EMTs To Administer Medication In Life Threatening Overdose Situations," Press Release, 3/21/14)
  - **Roseanne Scotti, state director for the Drug Policy Alliance:** "The waiver is 'fantastic news,' that 'gives the green light to EMTs across the state and will save lives ...'" (Susan K. Livio, "Christie allows EMTs to provide heroin antidote to prevent overdoses," [Star-Ledger](#), 3/21/14)

## ***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 appearing on the November ballot before voters, 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 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, which have committed \$4 million over the next four years. 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.