

Ending The Stigma

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Tags: [Addiction Taskforce](#)

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

Today, Governor Christie will join leaders from government, law enforcement, medical and the pharmaceutical sector to participate in the "Solutions for a New Way Forward" panel discussion. The forum, hosted by Scientific American at Jersey Shore University Medical Center in Neptune, will address the national opioid addiction epidemic and focus on the need to transform society's predisposition towards treating addiction as a moral failing, rather than as the disease that it is.

The panel will also include:

- Leonard Campanello, Chief of Police for the City of Gloucester, Mass.
- Dr. Andrea Barthwell, Deputy Director for Demand Reduction at the Office of National Drug Control Policy
- Behshad Sheldon, President & CEO of Braeburn Pharmaceuticals

Since the earliest days of his Administration, Governor Christie has emphasized the need to change the conversation on addiction and to begin focusing on treating those who are struggling with this disease. Today's discussion will focus on taking innovative solutions from the different segments in the fight against addiction and using them to work together to treat the whole person, every step of the way, on their road to recovery. This will include new policy initiatives proposed by government, as well as innovative treatment ideas and scientific advances championed by the private sector. By working in concert, the public and private sectors can continue taking the urgent action that is necessary to effectively address this crisis.

DOUBLING DOWN ON NEW JERSEY'S FIGHT AGAINST DRUG ADDICTION

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

In April 2016, Governor Christie announced that New York would become the seventh state to partner with New Jersey's Prescription Monitoring Program (NJMPMP). Since October 2014, the Christie Administration has worked to expand NJ's interstate data-sharing capabilities to include Delaware, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Virginia, Minnesota, and South Carolina.

- Since its inception in 2011, the database has captured information on more than 59 million written prescriptions and conducted more than 6 million user requests.
- Efforts to increase NJMPMP enrollment by doctors and other healthcare practitioners has led to a more than 400 percent increase in the number of physicians registered for NJMPMP access, and a more than 250 percent increase in the number of all prescribers and pharmacists registered for access.

New Jersey's First-Ever Dedicated, Licensed Treatment Facility To Revolutionize Drug Treatment In Prison

In his 2016 State of the State Address, Governor Christie called for reforms to fundamentally change how New Jersey treats addiction behind prison walls – making those efforts smarter, more accessible and more effectively integrated with re-entry efforts to help people stay clean.

- **New Jersey's First Ever Dedicated And Licensed State Correctional Drug Treatment Facility.** Mid-State Correctional Facility will reopen as a drug treatment facility dedicated to treating addicts behind prison walls – a first-of-

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its-kind program in New Jersey. Governor Christie is investing **\$2 million** to re-open Mid-State Correctional Facility in 2017 as an institution dedicated to the treatment of inmates. The new Mid-State Correctional Facility substance use disorder treatment program will be licensed by the Department of Human Services' Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS).

· **Building On Successful Treatment And Recidivism Efforts.** This program and the historic shift it represents is possible due to the success of New Jersey's recidivism and re-entry programs - long championed by Governor Christie - and the corresponding decline of the state's prison population.

- o From 2011-2014 under the Christie Administration, crime fell 20% and the state's prison population declined by nearly 10%.
- o Completion of a DHS-licensed treatment program will also allow inmates to be eligible for social services upon release, providing an important safety net for offenders transitioning back into the community.

This program will provide enhanced support to eliminate an obstacle to successful reentry into society, thus further reducing recidivism in New Jersey.

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. The Facing Addiction Task Force has served as the catalyst for the development of reforms and provided critical input for the implementation of treatment-related initiatives, providing feedback and advice from their meetings with community advocates and government officials.

Connecting Individuals With Recovery Coaches Following an Overdose

As a direct result of the Task Force's work, Governor Christie announced the launch of the "Recovery Coaches" program to reach and connect drug overdose survivors with treatment, counseling, and support services in the immediate aftermath of their overdose – a critical moment for successful intervention.

In June 2015 the NJ Department of Human Services (DHS) began the contracting process to develop an Opioid Overdose Recovery Program to put Recovery Coaches and Patient Navigators on the ground in hospitals to respond to individuals reversed from opioid overdoses and treated at hospital emergency rooms as a result of the reversal. This program will utilize these Recovery Coaches to engage individuals reversed from an opioid overdose to provide non-clinical assistance, recovery supports and appropriate referrals for assessment and substance use disorder treatment. This program puts support in reach for overdose victims at hospitals immediately after they are stabilized.

Governor Christie has allocated \$1.3 million for Recovery Specialists to providers in four counties and has proposed \$1.7 million in the fiscal year 2017 budget to expand the program into six more counties. Each county program is expected to serve 300 people annually.

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

In his 2015 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 safety net programs and into the workplace.

Through the program, The Reentry Corporation has worked to refer to or provide services to reentry clients including sober housing, substance use disorder treatment, employment services, help with acquiring an ID or driver's license, pro bono legal representation, and access to wrap-around social service programs such as Medicaid and food stamps.

· The New Jersey Reentry Corporation was formed with initial funding from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA), and was then provided operational funding for Jersey City, Newark, Paterson and Toms River. The Jersey City, Newark, and Paterson sites are operational; the Toms River site is expected to open in 2016.

Providing a Comprehensive Referral Source for Addiction Services

Governor Christie announced the formation of an Interim Management Entity (IME) for addiction treatment in January 2015. This program advances the Governor's efforts to take a smarter and more effective approach in how the State supports individuals with substance use disorders. The fiscal year 2016 budget included a \$2.3 million allocation to create a single point of entry for individuals in crisis and their families, and Governor Christie has proposed \$2.7 million for the 2017 budget. The rest of the \$9 million project is funded by the federal Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services.

Between July 1 and the end of March 2016, the IME received and responded to 42,354 calls.

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.

Statewide Expansion of Narcan to Train and Equip First Responders to Save Lives

In 2014, Governor Christie announced the statewide expansion of a successful pilot program launched in Ocean and Monmouth counties to help reduce the number of heroin-related deaths by training and equipping police officers and first responders to administer the antidote Narcan, a medication used to treat drug overdose patients in emergency situations.

- During 2014, the Christie Administration issued a waiver to more than **28,000** certified EMTs to allow them to administer Narcan.

- To date, there have been **11,468** deployments of Narcan throughout New Jersey.

- In June 2015, Governor Christie announced that police departments and other public first responder entities can purchase the life-saving opiate antidote Naloxone at a significant discount through an agreement negotiated with the New Jersey Office of the Attorney General and drug manufacturer Amphastar Pharmaceuticals, Inc. The agreement helped secure the affordability and availability of Naloxone kits to New Jersey law enforcement and first responders.

Establishing An Opioid Overdose Prevention Program To Expand The Success Of Narcan

Building on Governor Christie's statewide expansion of the Narcan program, the Department of Human Services' Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) has developed the Opioid Overdose Prevention Program (OOPP). This program will provide education to those at risk of an overdose, as well as their friends and family, and will train individuals to recognize an opiate overdose and to subsequently provide life-saving rescue measures using Narcan to save more lives from a preventable overdose.

- From the time the regionalized OOPP began in November 2015 through April 2016, **1,719** individuals have been trained to administer Narcan and **1,449** naloxone kits have been distributed during **161** DMHAS-funded trainings throughout the state.

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.

The fiscal year 2017 budget recommends total funding of nearly **\$64 million** to support the Drug Court program.

- To date, nine vicinages (Ocean, Hudson, Somerset/Hunterdon/Warren, Passaic, Mercer, Atlantic/Cape May, Bergen, Burlington, and Monmouth) have implemented mandatory Drug Courts, with another three (Essex, Cumberland/Salem/Gloucester and Middlesex) slated for July 2016. The fiscal 2017 budget increases funding to support the operational costs needed to expand the Drug Court Program into the final three vicinages.

In August 2015, Governor Christie signed legislation allowing for the completion of a special probation drug court program with use of medication-assisted treatment (MAT). The legislation further clarifies that any urine test for drug or alcohol use conducted in the course of the drug court program that shows a positive result for an individual using medication-assisted treatment would not constitute a program violation unless the positive test result is for substances unrelated to the individual's MAT. Through this bill, the treatment provider rather than a judge can now decide whether narcotic-based treatment should be permitted for convicted offenders who have been admitted to the Drug Court program for drug abuse.

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.

Establishing College & University Substance Abuse Recovery Housing Programs

In August 2015, Governor Christie signed legislation requiring four-year public colleges and universities to establish a substance abuse recovery housing program within four years. The college may designate an entire dormitory building, or an area within a dormitory such as a floor or wing. The legislation applies to Rutgers New Brunswick, Ramapo College, The College of New Jersey, Montclair State University, Rowan University, and Richard Stockton College of New Jersey. The Rutgers New Brunswick campus already has implemented a similar policy. Additionally, in December, the College of New Jersey received grant funding to establish a recovery housing program.

Preventing Over-The-Counter Drug Abuse

In October 2015, Governor Christie signed legislation prohibiting the sale of medications containing dextromethorphan, a substance found in more than 120 over-the-counter cold medications, to any person under the age of 18 unless they have a prescription. The legislation addresses the growing problem of teenagers overusing or abusing dextromethorphan to get high, leading them down a path of addiction in the future. The bill also requires the Department of Health to post a link on its website containing a list of products in which dextromethorphan is an active ingredient. The new law took effect on Feb. 1, 2016.

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