



MAYOR DAVID J. NARKEWICZ

City of Northampton

210 Main Street Room 12

Northampton, MA 01060-3199

(413) 587-1249 Fax: (413) 587-1275

mayor@northamptonma.gov

For Immediate Release – September 21, 2017

Northampton wins \$1.7 million grant to expand overdose response efforts

Today Mayor David J. Narkewicz announced that the City of Northampton has received a \$1.7 million grant for work in preventing opioid-related deaths in Hampshire County. This four-year federal grant will be coordinated through Hampshire HOPE, which is a regional opioid prevention coalition that is run out of the Northampton Health Department. The funds will be used to cover the cost of several interrelated initiatives, including the purchase of Naloxone (Narcan), the life-saving opiate overdose reversal drug, and the creation of specialized overdose response teams.

“I am extremely proud that our city was able to secure these highly competitive federal funds to expand the life-saving prevention efforts of Hampshire HOPE on this critical public health crisis affecting municipalities in our region and across the state and nation,” said Mayor Narkewicz. “Northampton was the only city in America awarded this grant and I commend the Northampton Public Health Department and its Director Merridith O’Leary for putting together an innovative application that will scale up the work of Hampshire HOPE to serve all of Hampshire County.”

The grant was awarded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. There were only 21 grants awarded nationwide and the City of Northampton was the only municipality among 20 other state, county or tribal health departments. It was the only grant awarded in Massachusetts and one of only two in New England.

“Since 2011 there has been dramatic increase of opioid overdose fatalities in Hampshire County and having all first responders equipped with and trained on Naloxone administration, could mean the difference of many lives being saved,” stated Northampton Public Health Director, Merridith O’Leary.

The grant provides funding to allow bulk purchasing of Naloxone as well as replacing doses as they are used. Initially 3,225 doses of Naloxone will be purchased at a cost of nearly \$100,000, and will be distributed to Hampshire County police and fire departments and key community sectors. Currently, 40 percent of Hampshire County police departments don’t carry Naloxone, in part because of the cost.

With collaboration between Cooley Dickinson and Mary Lane Baystate Hospital, Tapestry Health, Behavioral Health Network, Clinical Support Options, first responders, police, addiction treatment centers and many other social service agencies, the grant will also support the creation of special overdose response teams. Overdose response teams will work to remove gaps in services by knitting together a network of responders and providers within the intervention, treatment and recovery arenas. In addition to regular meetings to plan strategy and coordinate care, the teams will provide training to police and other emergency responders and professionals who come into contact with people addicted to opioids.

“It’s the next step in a more coordinated system of outreach to those who have experienced an overdose, as well as their loved ones. We see this as a chance to think outside the box of a traditional treatment model,” said J. Cherry Sullivan, coordinator for Hampshire HOPE.

The response teams will be modeled on a pilot program launched last year by the Northampton Police Department, the Drug Addiction Response Team (known as DART) and another program in Lake County, Illinois, where police provide support and fast track to treatment. With the grant, the DART program will be enhanced and additional regional response teams will be created. Northwestern District Attorney David Sullivan’s office will work with the effort by providing municipalities with templated policies and protocols, providing police with Naloxone, and its Drug Diversion and Treatment Program which aims to keep low level drug offenders out of the criminal justice system and move them into treatment and recovery.

--END--