

Governor Markell Marks Next Stage in Fight against Addiction Epidemic

Details \$4.45M in Spending Priorities for FY16

Harrington, DE – Responding to the need for increased addiction treatment and recovery services statewide in the face of an epidemic that claims a life from overdose every other day, Governor Markell joined Department of Health and Social Services Secretary Rita Landgraf and other leaders today to detail the state's priorities for the \$4.45 million in new resources provided by the Fiscal Year 2016 budget.

Speaking at the construction site for a new withdrawal management clinic in Harrington, Governor Markell said that facility exemplifies the state's commitment to serve the thousands of Delawareans and their families affected by the state's addiction epidemic. In 2014, there were 185 suspected overdose deaths in Delaware, or about one every other day.

Across the country, Delaware ranked 10th for overdose deaths. Almost 10,000 Delaware adults sought public treatment in 2014, with about one-third of those adults indicating heroin as their primary drug at the time of admission.

"The addiction epidemic is straining our public system beyond its capacity, with many people turned away for services when they are ready for treatment, or being forced to wait for services or supports to open up for them," said Governor Markell, who proposed additional resources to treat substance use disorders in his State of the State address and FY2016 budget proposal. "I am grateful these new resources to increase treatment capacity remained in the budget, and I applaud members of General Assembly for holding steadfast to a commitment to increase treatment and recovery services,

especially in a challenging fiscal environment.”

The withdrawal management clinic, operated for the Department of Health and Social Services by Connections Community Support Programs, Inc., is expected to open within a month to serve people in need, especially those in Kent and Sussex counties. The state’s other withdrawal management clinic is in New Castle County. With \$750,000 in funding, both clinics will match withdrawal services to the individual’s needs, rather than using a one-size-fits-all approach. Both programs will have:

- 16 beds for clinically managed and medically monitored detoxification;
- 12 23-hour slots to allow for stabilization and observation of an individual who might not need a medically or clinically monitored withdrawal program; and
- Ambulatory withdrawal management services, which can serve 30 to 100 individuals for 30 days in an intensive outpatient setting.

Secretary Landgraf detailed the state’s efforts to fight addiction on three fronts: prevention and education; treatment and recovery; and criminal justice. She cited the training and increased use of the overdose-reversing medication naloxone among members of the community and law enforcement, the use of the Good Samaritan/911 Law to allow people to call in overdoses without risking arrest for minor drug offenses, and an ongoing underage and binge drinking prevention campaign.

“We know all too well that addiction is indeed a disease of epidemic proportion, one that does not discriminate and that takes a toll every day on Delaware families,” Secretary Landgraf said. “With the help of these new state resources, we will continue to embrace communities of recovery such as the one being built in Harrington.”

Department of Correction Commissioner Robert Coupe noted additional state spending in community treatment services will have a positive impact on the criminal justice system.

“For far too many individuals across our state, their addiction is a primary driver of destructive behavior that puts them into contact with the criminal justice system,” Commissioner Coupe said. “Increasing the number of treatment facilities in the community will ensure those who return to the community from a period of supervision by our department will have an opportunity to continue to participate in the addiction-related treatment they need to stay clean and sober, break their cycle of criminal behavior, and support their successful reentry to society.”

Mike Barbieri, the new director of DHSS’ Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH), detailed the priorities for the remainder of the \$4.45 million in new funding. It would allow DSAMH to:

- Expand the capacity of residential treatment programs throughout the state by opening new programs statewide. This will be done by reconfiguring the existing program at Delaware City and opening three 16-bed units across the state. When the changes are completed, the number of residential treatment beds is expected to increase from 78 to 95. (\$800,000)
- Double the number of sober living residential beds statewide from 60 to 120, allowing more individuals who are in the early stages of recovery to live in safe and secure housing that is free from drugs and alcohol. (\$935,000)
- Double the number of residential treatment beds across the state from 16 to 32 for young people age 18 to 25 who are beginning their recoveries from addiction to heroin or other opiates. (\$1.15 million)
- Fund start-up costs for residential treatment programs. (\$815,000 in one-time funds)

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