

Worcester County Overdose Response Program Sees Successes in First Year

WORCESTER – More than half of those offered services following an overdose accepted treatment as part of a program launched last year by District Attorney Joseph D. Early Jr. and all 60 police departments in Worcester County.

Critical Incident Management System (CIMS) launched in March 2020 and was used by police departments in all of Worcester County's cities and towns over the last year to collect overdose data and respond to non-fatal overdose victims to offer services. The response visits were performed with a plain-clothes police officer and a recovery coach usually within 48 hours of an overdose incident.

Data from the last year shows that on 52 percent of the follow-up visits, individuals accepted services. In another 9 percent of instances the individuals were already seeking services.

"These are encouraging numbers," said Mr. Early in a press conference today. "It was a challenging year to launch this program with the roadblocks presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. These numbers are a promising start. Any time we can help even one person get access to treatment is a life that is being saved."

The District Attorney's office purchased the CIMS software for \$40,000



using drug forfeiture funds in 2019 from developers Kelley Research Associates. The implementation of CIMS was a successful partnership between the District Attorney's Office, local police departments and municipalities.

"By getting the names of the folks who've had the non-fatal overdoses and by giving the opportunity for the follow up...what you've done is open the door. You've made the connection. You've provided an opportunity for that person when they're ready to take advantage of the treatment options that are available to them," said Worcester City Manager

Edward Augustus.

CIMS allows police departments to share information, as well, so that when a person overdoses outside of their hometown they are still receiving a follow up visit.

"Addiction has no jurisdictional boundaries," said Fitchburg Police Chief Ernest Martineau, former President of the Central Mass. Chiefs of Police Association. "When there's no boundary for that, there can be no boundary for helping people. And that's what this does. It connects 60 cities and towns police departments in respond-

ing and helping."

"The beauty of CIMS coming on board is now we have a centralized database that's tracking and we get an alert when we have to go offer up services. And the other thing that we were missing was when people were outside of Webster having an overdose, we never knew. Now with CIMS, we can follow up with them. It's a really integral part of getting these people the help they need," said Webster Police Chief Michael Shaw. Webster's responses to those in need are assisted by a partnership with Opening the Word Recovery Center, run by Rev. Janice Ford, which opened in June 2020 and served more than 2,000 people.

In fall of 2020, the District Attorney's office was awarded a \$1.2 million grant from the federal Department of Justice-Bureau of Justice Assistance to fund recovery coaches that will respond with police to follow up and offer services after an overdose.

Mr. Early was also joined at the press conference by Worcester Police Chief Steven Sargent, current President of the Central Mass. Chiefs of Police Association and Southbridge Chief Shane Woodson, Dudley Police Chief Steven Wojnar, and Worcester Fire Department Deputy Chief John Powers.

New summer series launches July 8 with free concert by the Brubeck Brothers Quartet

Music Worcester begins its first summer series of concerts, Summer @ MW, on Thursday, July 8 with a free presentation of the Brubeck Brothers Quartet, the sons of legendary Dave Brubeck, in Auburn, MA.

Two other concerts later in the month bring the Hot Sardines to Indian Ranch in Webster, MA on July 22, and the Gospel choir Trey McLaughlin & The Sounds of Zamar to The Hanover Theatre in Worcester on July 25. This inaugural Summer @ MW season will continue through early September, with additional concerts being announced very soon.

"As Music Worcester started planning to emerge from this recent pandemic, virtual season of programming, it became apparent that we could move somewhat quickly and bring back our live music presentations to Greater Worcester far earlier than our usual October season opener," noted Adrien Finlay, Executive Director. "We are extraordinarily excited to add summer programming to our annual activities from this

VENUES IN JULY INCLUDE THE RILEY-PAPPAS PAVILION IN AUBURN, INDIAN RANCH IN WEBSTER, & THE HANOVER THEATRE IN WORCESTER.



point forward, which will allow us to explore new venues and welcome even more varied artists and ensembles to the region." The concerts at Indian Ranch and The Hanover Theatre will feature seating sections where distanced "pods" of seats will be available for patrons who prefer or need such an option, with general admission seating available elsewhere at both venues. Calendar listings for July: Brubeck Brothers Quartet Thursday, July 8 at 6pm Riley-Pappas Pavilion, Auburn, MA Free, open to the public Hot Sardines Thursday, July 22 at 6pm

Indian Ranch, Webster, MA \$35+, tickets required, limited distanced seating available Trey McLaughlin & The Sounds of Zamar Sunday, July 25 at 6pm The Hanover Theatre, Worcester, MA \$25 students; \$35+ adults, tickets required, limited dis-

tanced seating available About Music Worcester: Music Worcester, Inc., originally known as the Worcester County Music Association, for years ran the Worcester Music Festival. Current programs reflect the merger in the mid-1990s of the Festival with International Artists Series and the MA Jazz Festival. Great performances by world-renowned orchestras and guest soloists, chamber music, ballet, world music and dance, jazz and choral masterworks are hallmarks of Music Worcester's annual operations. Multiple educational programs currently serve youth and families of greater Worcester: masterclasses by visiting artists, Tickets to Opportunity, in-schools residencies, and the Young Artist Competitions. The 2020-2021 virtual season has featured violinist Joshua Bell, pianists Asiya Korepanova and Simone Dinnerstein, the vocal ensemble Chanticleer, folk musician Rhiannon Giddens, and The Worcester Chorus. WWW.MUSICWORCESTER.ORG

QCC is a Vaccine Champion College

WORCESTER, MA— June 23, 2021— Quinsigamond Community College has joined President Biden's COVID-19 College Vaccination Challenge. Colleges across the country are being asked to commit to taking actions that will engage their college communities and encourage everyone to get vaccinated. Statistics show that a significant portion of the older population have been vaccinated; however, the younger generation is lagging behind. Colleges and universities offer a significant opportunity to reach that younger generation.

"We are committed to keeping our college community, our city, and the Commonwealth safe. The best way to do

this is by getting vaccinated," said QCC President Luis G. Pedraja, Ph.D. "This is a challenge I hope all colleges and universities will stand behind so that we can put an end to this global health crisis."

QCC has taken a visible role in COVID-19 community outreach. The College developed a comprehensive, COVID-19 vaccination webpage offering vaccination information through public service videos in multiple languages, along with fact sheets in multiple languages, a link to vaccination locations and a link to the Massachusetts COVID-19 information website.

QCC has already hosted two Moderna Vaccine Clinics on its campus (670 West

Boylston, Street, Worcester) for the QCC community, as well as faculty, staff and students from Assumption University, Anna Maria College and Becker College. Approximately 90 people were vaccinated at each clinic.

"Spreading the word about the importance of getting vaccinated has been a priority at QCC. Offering information that is easily accessible, in multiple languages, enables us to reach more in our community," President Pedraja said. "By hosting vaccine clinics, we are providing easier access for our students, their families, as well as QCC employees, which enables more in our community to be vaccinated."

President's Biden's goal is to have 160 million Americans being fully vaccinated by July 4.

For more information about QCC, contact Josh Martin, Director of Institutional Communications at 508.854.7513 or jmartin@qcc.mass.edu

Quinsigamond Community College provides the community with high quality, affordable higher education in Worcester County. As a regional leader in education and workforce development, QCC serves the diverse educational needs of Central Massachusetts by providing affordable, accessible, and high quality programming leading to transfer, career, and lifelong learning.

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