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News Updates

OCEAN COUNTY PROGRAM FIRST IN NJ TO SEND THOSE FIGHTING ADDICTION TO REHAB, NOT PRISON

Posted on 9 Jan 2017 | Released By OCP Website Admin (<http://oceancountyprosecutor.org/author/ocpowebadmin/>)
In Press Release (<http://oceancountyprosecutor.org/category/press-release/>)

Prosecutor Joseph D. Coronato, Brick Police Chief James Riccio and Manchester Police Chief Lisa Parker today announced the first of its kind law enforcement addiction help program in New Jersey. The "Heroin Addiction Response Program" (HARP) will allow substance abusers to turn themselves and their product in at either of the above participating police headquarters, to go to addiction services providers for treatment evaluation without any threat of charges or jail.

This week, Brick and Manchester PDs will begin this innovative initiative by partnering with Preferred Behavioral Health in Lakewood and Integrity House in Toms River to pilot the HARP program. Initially, the two departments and their health providers will make the life changing option available two days a week. Those fighting addiction, regardless of their residency, can go to Manchester Police Department on Wednesday or Brick Police Department on Thursday to seek immediate critical help in fighting drug addiction.

The program is the latest initiative on the heels of Narcan and the Recovery Coach Program to offer substantial diversion help in order to reduce the impact of heroin and opiate abuse in our community, while encouraging those who suffer from addiction to seek help and experience recovery. Prosecutor Coronato stated, "It is my mandate that Ocean County Law Enforcement treat all those suffering from addiction with compassion, care, and concern while providing resources to assist in their recovery. This is another valuable partnership with Health Providers that is a substantial addition to support our three prong approach in combatting the opiate epidemic thru – Education/prevention, Enforcement and Treatment.

The premise of the program is simple – any person who voluntarily enters the two participating agencies and requests help with addiction to heroin or opiates or any substance shall be immediately screened for potential participation in HARP. Although HARP is primarily designed to apply to persons who present themselves at the station, an officer who encounters a person outside the police station believing they would benefit from HARP has the discretion, based upon their training and experience, to bring an individual to the police station if the person consents to the voluntary screening process. The officer/shift supervisor, upon completion of the HARP screening process shall provide transportation for the participant to the designated provider as soon as reasonably possible.

Prosecutor Coronato concluded by saying, "It's the generous commitment of Behavioral Health and Integrity House, along with Brick and Manchester PD's pro-active community outreach that makes this all possible. It is the hope of the Ocean County Prosecutor's Office to elicit other local law enforcement/health provider partnerships in the next several months to expand the program across Ocean County".

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