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Law Enforcement Conference Addresses Opioid Misuse, Highlights Prevention

WETHERSFIELD, CT, April 9, 2018 – The statistics of opioid overdoses and deaths in our state can be overwhelming. However, there was a message of hope that we can overcome the opioid crises in Connecticut and throughout the country at the *2018 CT Law Enforcement Conference to Address Opioid Misuse* on April 5th in Cromwell. The conference, hosted by The Governor's Prevention Partnership (The Partnership) was funded by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) as part of the State Targeted Response to the Opioid Crisis Grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and the Department of Public Health (DPH).

The conference goal is to empower law enforcement professionals with the tools, resources and strategies necessary to combat this crisis in their own communities.

“All community sectors, including law enforcement, play a critical role in responding to the opioid crisis,” said DMHAS Commissioner Miriam Delphin-Rittmon. “Police officers often have contact with people struggling with addiction. Our partnership in the education of communities regarding addiction; understanding it as a chronic illness and being informed about treatment and recovery support options available in Connecticut, is essential.”

The audience of over 350 law enforcement, public health and prevention partners came together to learn from the experts about prevention education programs, developing strong partnerships between law enforcement and community service agencies, evidence-based services for youth and so much more.

“As we've learned from research on the opioid epidemic, prevention strategies are crucial to solving this problem,” said Jill Spinetti, President of The Partnership. “We hope the conversation continues after the conference so that law enforcement officials along with community leaders can take a multifaceted approach to saving lives.”

Keynoting the conference were Chauncey Parker, Director of the New York/New Jersey High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area program, and Rita Noonan, Sociologist and Branch Chief in CDC's Division of Unintentional Injury Prevention.



Parker spoke about the new direction that police forces are taking to save lives, moving from a model of law enforcement and arrests to a mission of reducing the numbers of people who die of drug overdoses. This Heroin Response Strategy is operating in 23 states and works with local police departments to share information and connect with local health partners.

Noonan outlined the work the CDC is doing and how we can learn to battle the opioid epidemic by looking closely at how the HIV/AIDS epidemic was handled in the 1990s. The diverse tactics involve prevention strategies, partnering with local law enforcement and community organizations, treatment and recovery, and thinking of new ways to tackle the problems that are based on scientific evidence and findings.

If you would like more information on the opioid epidemic and how prevention strategies can play a role in eradicating it, visit: www.preventionworksct.org/resources/resources.html

About the Governor's Prevention Partnership

Created in 1989, the Governor's Prevention Partnership is a not-for-profit partnership between state government and business leaders with a mission to keep Connecticut's youth, safe, successful, and drugfree. Co-chaired by Governor Malloy and a local business leader, the organization focuses on positive school climate, mentoring, and the prevention of underage drinking and substance abuse. Learn more at www.PreventionWorksCT.org.

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