



# COUNTY OF ERIE

**MARK C. POLONCARZ**

COUNTY EXECUTIVE

## EXECUTIVE ORDER #014

### ESTABLISHMENT OF AN OPIOID EPIDEMIC TASK FORCE

**WHEREAS**, the Erie County Health Department has noted a sustained and growing number of opioid addicted persons in our community, identifying a public health crisis; and

**WHEREAS**, the Erie County Medical Examiner's Office projects 2015 to be the year with the greatest number of reported opioid related fatalities, with well over 200 deaths; and

**WHEREAS**, if not for the distribution of Naloxone to first responders, and widespread training in its use to the general public, the number of opioid related fatalities would have been significantly higher; and

**WHEREAS**, the Erie County Department of Mental Health has identified the need for additional inpatient beds, out-patient slots, community-based medication-assisted treatment with methadone and suboxone, and related services to treat those suffering from opioid addiction; and

**WHEREAS**, the opioid crisis affects nearly every part of Erie County be it urban, rural, or suburban; and

**WHEREAS**, opioid addiction often starts in individuals who are prescribed opioid pain medications or who take opioid medication prescribed for other people and may progress to using illegally manufactured drugs, such as heroin; and

**WHEREAS**, dangerous and powerful opioids, such as fentanyl, are increasingly being found on our streets, in addition to heroin; and

**WHEREAS**, no single strategy alone can address this complex, multifaceted issue; and

**WHEREAS**, coordination of the many individual anti-opioid initiatives currently being undertaken throughout Western New York is critically needed.

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, MARK C. POLONCARZ**, Erie County Executive, by virtue of the authority vested in me by Erie County's Charter Sections 301 and 302, do hereby declare a public health crisis related to the opioid epidemic exists in Erie County and do hereby order as follows:

1. The creation of an Opioid Epidemic Task Force to be headed by the Commissioners of Health and Mental Health.

2. That the Opioid Epidemic Task Force will include community experts from social service agencies, law enforcement, physicians, mental health and addictions providers, the health insurance industry, and members of victims' families.

3. That the Opioid Epidemic Task Force will examine all areas of the opioid crisis including but not limited to opioid prescribing practices, access to inpatient, outpatient, and community-based medication-assisted treatment programs, police-assisted recovery, and the distribution of lifesaving medication like Naloxone.

4. That the Opioid Epidemic Task Force will serve to coordinate efforts of its members and the Opioid Epidemic Task Force shall have the power to create various work groups and/or other subcommittees to assist it in the performance of its duties.

5. That the Opioid Epidemic Task Force work groups shall meet on no less than a monthly basis and the formal Opioid Epidemic Task Force shall meet quarterly and report back its progress to the undersigned on a quarterly basis until such a time as the work of the task force is no longer needed.

**GIVEN**, under my hand and the Privy Seal of the County of Erie in the City of Buffalo this 19th day of January, in the year two thousand sixteen.



COUNTY OF ERIE

BY:

  
MARK C. POLONCARZ  
ERIE COUNTY EXECUTIVE