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COUNTY OF ERIE

MARK C. POLONCARZ
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

March 8, 2016

The Honorable
Erie County Legislature
92 Franklin Street – Fourth Floor
Buffalo, New York 14202

RE: Opioid Crisis Response Plan

Dear Honorable Members:

Since 2013 opioids have claimed the lives of over 500 Erie County residents. Overdoses are killing more people aged 25 to 64 than motor vehicle crashes. Each year the Erie County Medical Examiner's Office has reported significant increases in the number of opioid fatalities year over year, and 2016 is on track to be the worst year yet. This is a public health crisis.

To that end, I have established an Opioid Epidemic Task Force. In addition, I directed the Commissioners of Mental Health and Health to review their current efforts to combat the opioid epidemic and to request, if necessary, additional resources to improve the County's response to this crisis. This is a crisis that affects every corner of Erie County, be it rural, urban, or suburban. County Government can and must continue to take a leadership role on this issue.

The attached resolution seeks to close three important gaps in our fight against opioid addiction:

1. The need for a central coordinating service to help police agencies, emergency rooms, and families get opioid addicts into treatment.
2. The need for dedicated community education staff.
3. The need for follow-up and data management on the use of naloxone or Narcan™.

Should your Honorable Body require further information, I encourage you to contact Health Commissioner Gale R. Burstein, MD and Mental Health Commissioner Michael R. Ranney, CRC-R, LMHC. Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,

Mark C. Poloncarz, Esq.
Erie County Executive

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Enclosure

MEMORANDUM

To: Honorable Members of the Erie County Legislature
From: Departments of Health and Mental Health
Re: Opioid Crisis Response Plan
Date: March 8, 2016

SUMMARY

Authorization is requested to expand the Department of Mental Health's existing contract with Suicide Prevention and Crisis Services, Inc. ("Crisis Services") and to create one new position of Public Health Educator and one new position of Account Clerk in the Department of Health.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The total cost of this proposal is $375,595. Funds in 2016 will be made available through a designation and rollover of 2015 funds into 2016.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

Expanded Crisis Services Contract- Law enforcement, emergency room physicians and families have repeatedly noted one key need is a 24/7 Substance Abuse and Addiction Screening, Information, and Referral Service. There are many resources available to help get addicts into treatment, but the community lacks a central clearing house to link people to care. Crisis Services has a long history of providing Erie County with this service for Suicide Prevention, and an expansion of Erie County's existing contract with Crisis Services will enable them to offer this critical service.

Public Health Educator-Currently a single Medical Care Administrator in the Erie County Department of Health is coordinating the preponderance of opioid epidemic activities including naloxone trainings, liaising with law enforcement, coordinating task-force activities, and more. A dedicated employee to coordinate and implement opiate harm reduction activities is urgently needed to allow continued growth and successful management of these important programs.

Account Clerk-Large amounts of data and paperwork are being generated through the Erie County Department of Health's opioid harm reduction activities include naloxone usage reports, reports and correspondence from the 200+ member Opioid Epidemic Task Force, and soon, reports from volunteer 'Angels' who will assisting with the Police Assisted Addiction and Recovery Initiative (PAARI).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Crisis Services-In response to the need identified for the community to have a place to call for help and information for dealing with substance abuse and addiction issues, Crisis Services will implement the following service model:

- Provide coverage 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Crisis Services will provide screening, information and referral information for all callers. Crisis Services staff will provide guidance and direction on the options for immediate help and referrals for treatment and follow up services. If immediate intervention is needed for a mental health issue (person is threatening suicide or harm to others) the call with be assessed and referred appropriately to Mobile Outreach department or 911 if urgent.

- Crisis Services will deploy a new, dedicated phone number for this hotline. This will allow for Crisis Services to identify these calls to direct them to dedicated staff. This line will be marketed locally and also the tie in with the current number for the 'painkillers kill' campaign that is managed by Horizon/211.
- The information line can be accessed by emergency department staff when they are presented with a person at the emergency room after an overdose who is in need of support and linkage to treatment. They can call the line and the counselor will assess the situation and help give direction on next steps and referrals to services.
- This line will also serve as the access point for REAP (Rapid Evaluation and Appropriate Placement) through the LEAC of WNY (Law Enforcement Assistance Consortium). Law enforcement will provide the schedule of "Angels" and when a jurisdiction has someone present at their department as part of this initiative they contact the dedicated line to activate the "Angel" to respond. This is a core function of the PAARI project.
- All calls will be logged into a report software system. A specialized call log form will be created for this information line to capture client information and statistics for the County. Monthly and quarterly reports on the issues that are being requested for assistance and the resolutions to the call will be generated.

Crisis Services has a successful track record in providing similar services and interventions for suicide prevention and other mental health crisis. This service will expand upon Erie County's existing contract with Crisis Services. Crisis Services will provide an additional 5.5 FTEs to staff this service including highly trained MSWs.

Public Health Educator- Erie County has experienced an exponential increase in opioid related deaths. ECDOH has declared opioid addiction a public health crisis and is partnering with local health plans, physician networks, the UB schools of health professionals, the Pharmacy Association of WNY, and community organizations to take action to treat current and prevent future opioid addictions. The Erie County Department of Health portfolio of activities to prevent opioid addiction and death has significantly expanded in the past 6 months. A position dedicated to coordinating and implementing Erie County opiate use Harm Reduction Activities is urgently needed to allow continued growth of these important programs. Day to day tasks would include naloxone trainings, implementation of addictions management programs including expansion of suboxone provider network, and expansion/maintenance of drug drop off sites.

Account Clerk- Proper management and cataloging of paperwork related to opioid abuse prevention activities is critical. Keeping track of naloxone usage, pharmaceutical turn ins, needle disposal, training reports, and much more is time consuming process that can be managed by a lower-job group clerical title.

CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION

The community very much needs a central service provider to coordinate and link those who need addictions treatment to care. Without such a service, police, emergency departments, and families will be forced to navigate a complex network of treatment options and providers on their own, or in many cases, not at all. Erie County will continue to see high numbers of individuals who have to be repeatedly saved by naloxone, taken to the emergency room again and again. In addition, the Erie County Department of Health will be limited in its ability to expand and implement addiction prevention strategies in the community.

STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL

The Health and Mental Health Departments will work with the Division of Budget and Management, the Department of Personnel and the Comptroller's Office to implement this request.

A RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY
DEPARTMENTS OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH

RE: Opioid Crisis Response Plan

WHEREAS, the Erie County Departments of Health and Mental Health have noted a sustained and growing number of opioid addicted person in our community identifying a public health crisis; and

WHEREAS, the Erie County Medical Examiner's Office has confirmed 2015 to be the year with the greatest number of opioid related fatalities on record with well over 200 deaths; and

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

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

WHEREAS, a need a dedicated service to provide police agencies, physicians, and families with a single coordinating entry point to get opiate-addicted individuals into treatment has been identified; and

WHEREAS, Crisis Services is uniquely and solely situated to provide this critical service and has the expertise and staff to manage this complex operation and has a decades long track record of providing similar services to the Erie County Department of Mental Health; and

WHEREAS, the Erie County Department of Health seeks to provide robust coordination of community wide addiction harm reduction service through a dedicated unit.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature hereby authorizes the creation of one full time position of Public Health Educator JG 8, Step 0 ($35,025 annual salary) in the CSEA bargaining unit (B-100 #8651); and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature herby authorizes the creation of on full time position of Account Clerk JG 4 Step 0 ($26,749 annual salary) in the CSEA bargaining unit (B-100 #8652); and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature herby authorize the expansion of Crisis Service contract # 16-177-MH to add Substance Abuse and Addiction Screening, Information, and Referral Line services in an amount not to exceed $301,467; and be it further

RESOLVED, that authorization is hereby provided to transfer in 2015 an amount totaling $375,595 to expense designated for the Health Department and Mental Health Department and then to reappropriate such funding into the 2016 Budget as follows:

Fund 110 - 2016 Budget
12700 – Health Division

Expense Accounts		Increase
500000 Full Time Salaries		$46,330
502000 Fringe Benefits		27,798
	Total	$74,128

Fund 110 - 2016 Budget
12410– Mental Health Program Administration

Expense Accounts	Increase
517818 Suicide Prevention and Crisis Service OMH	$301,467
Total	$301,467

; and be it further

RESOLVED, that authorization is hereby provided to the Director of Budget and Management to establish designations in 2015 for the amounts indicated above and to reappropriate said funds into 2016, and be it further

RESOLVED, that authorization is hereby provided to the Division of Budget and Management and Department of Personnel to make the necessary budgetary and personnel adjustments to effectuate this resolution; and be it further

RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution will be forwarded to the County Executive, the Office of the Comptroller, the Division of Budget and Management, the Department of Law, Department of Mental Health and Department of Health.