

MEMORANDUM

To: Honorable Members of the Erie County Legislature
From: Departments of Health & Mental Health
Re: Proposed spending plan contemplated by INTRO 7-8
Date: May 23rd 2017

SUMMARY

Per INTRO 7-8, and at the request of the Erie County Legislature's Health and Human Services Committee, the Departments of Health and Mental Health, in consultation with the Division of Budget and Management, have developed the following spending proposal. This plan addresses immediate and medium-term challenges associated with the opioid epidemic. All of the proposed items have no identified state or federal source of funding, to ensure county resources are not spent in a duplicitous manner.

NARCAN DISTRIBUTION

The Erie County Department of Health (ECDOH) is the primary naloxone distribution agency in Erie County. We currently provide first responders and civilians generic, 2mg/2ml naloxone doses along with atomizing devices which are then assembled into a functional kit. These kits are provided free of charge through a partnership with the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) AIDS institute.

Due to the high potency of the opioids currently being sold and used in Erie County, multiple naloxone doses are frequently need for a successful resuscitation. Adapt Pharma has distribution rights for the Narcan™ Nasal Spray product which is distributed in a preassembled atomizer, with a 4mg/ml dose. This is the only device FDA approved for nasal deployment of Narcan™. Erie County had a small supply of this product which was distributed to Buffalo Police and Fire in the areas with the highest number of overdoses, in particular A District. During this trial, first responders reported better responses from overdose victims, and required fewer doses to revive an individual.

With even more potent opioids identified in overdose victims and in Erie County Central Police Services laboratory testing, a more widespread deployment of the higher dosage Adapt Pharma Narcan™ will potentially save additional lives. We propose purchasing 4,000 doses of the 4mg/4ml Narcan™ product to deploy with first responders throughout Erie County. ECDOH would be able to purchase the produce at the exclusive government rate of \$36.50 per dose.

Total Cost→\$150,000

Time to implement→Upon legislative authorization to contract, product could be shipped within 48 hours.

EXPANDED HARM REDUCTION

Evergreen Health Services is the leading harm reduction agency in Erie County and has been on the frontline of the opioid epidemic since day one. Evergreen operates the only needle and

syringe exchange program in Erie County, and the only mobile outreach van which offers an array of services for injection drug users, including linkage to treatment.

We propose expanding the services and availability of the mobile outreach unit, and the existing harm reduction office significantly. Currently the mobile unit only operates 1.5 days per week. One full day in Niagara County and a half day in Erie County. With additional funding Evergreen will operate the mobile unit for an addition 3 days per week in Erie County, and additional linkages to treatment including immediate access to buprenorphine and linkage to maintenance medication assisted treatment. Other services include clean needle exchange, Hepatitis-C testing, HIV testing, and peer counseling. These kinds of services are helpful for individuals not yet ready to fully commit to an intensive inpatient or outpatient program, and can help slowly move individuals with opioid use disorder towards treatment and into recovery. The mobile unit would rotate through known high-traffic areas on a rotating basis.

Total Cost→\$300,000

Time to implement→Upon legislative authorization to contract, hiring could begin immediately. 4-6 weeks to staff up.

24/7 DROP-IN SITE

An RFP from the New York State Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services for \$500,000 per year will partially fund a 24/7 drop-in site for Erie County. This location will provide a place for individuals seeking treatment to get assessed and referred to treatment at any time of day. It will also serve, critically, as a diversion site for individuals who turn themselves into to police, or are arrested for minor possession charges.

While \$500,000 per year will go a long way towards staffing the site, the actual cost to set up the location including capital improvements, furnishings, and office supplies would be rapidly consumed by this modest budget. We propose reserving a portion of this funding to assist the agency that is designated by NYS to manage the site set up the operation at the winning location.

Total Cost→\$175,000

Time to implement→Upon OASAS determining a winner for the 24/7 drop-in site RFP, we would submit a resolution to allocate funding as needed to appropriate funding for capital needs associated with the project.

CORRECTIONAL ADDICTION TREATMENT & DISCHARGE PLANNING

Currently neither Sherriff's Correctional Division nor the Erie County Department of Mental Health's Forensic Mental Health office are participating in discharge planning for individuals with opioid use disorder before they are released from the Erie County Correctional Facility or Holding Center. This lack of discharge planning creates a serious vacuum for the individual and increases their likelihood to continue using opioids.

We propose embedding a JG12 Forensic Mental Health Addictions Specialist and a JG8 Forensic Mental Health Discharge Planner into the holding center to do this important work.

Total Cost→\$145,000 inc. salary and fringe

Time to implement→Upon legislative authorization to create the position, 3-4 weeks to canvass any available lists, post the position, and hire.

MEDICAL EXAMINER URGENT NEEDS

The Erie County Medical Examiner's Office has played a critical role in tracking, understanding, and confronting the opioid epidemic. They are the eyes and ears of law enforcement, the treatment community, and public health experts. Unfortunately, due to cuts during the Red-Green fiscal crisis, and again from 2008-2011, the Erie County Medical Examiner's Office is chronically short-staffed and despite recent additions only has 24 employees. In comparison, Monroe County has 42 employees and Onondaga County has 55 employees.

The opioid epidemic has dramatically worsened this issue. At the current rate, the office will need to stop performing full autopsies on suspected overdose cases, which could affect the District Attorney's ability to prosecute. In addition, already lengthy toxicology testing times may worsen. Significant efforts have been made to improve efficiencies through technology improvements, but this can only go so far.

In order to maintain the high quality of work at the office, which has been vital to law enforcement efforts, it is necessary to add additional positions to the office. The added staff will be of benefit to the loved ones of individuals who suffer from a fatal overdose, and also to law enforcement and prosecutors who will soon be pursuing ways to press homicide charges against drug dealers who can be linked to a fatal overdose.

After consultation with the Chief Medical Examiner we propose the following staffing additions:

- 2-Toxicologist I JG9
- 1-Forensic Lab Technician JG7
- 1-Autopsy Technician JG8
- 1-Principal Clerk JG6

To generate savings, a vacant position of Laboratory Assistant (JG5) can be deleted. Please note that while this will provide some much need assistance to the ME's office but will not completely eliminate the offices staffing issues. The office will be making a more comprehensive request in the 2018 Budget proposal.

Total Cost→\$230,000

Time to implement→ Upon legislative authorization to create the position, 3-4 weeks to canvass any available lists, post the positions, and hire.