



Town of Natick

Town Administrator's Office

July 27, 2018

For Immediate Release

It has come to the Town of Natick's attention that a message about opioid overdoses was recently displayed in a public space. Natick, like all communities, is working to address the opioid epidemic. The losses within our community affect us all, and we will continue to take a proactive approach. This means doing all we can to ensure that individuals suffering from the disease of addiction can access the treatment and support they need. Some of the specific steps taken in the Town of Natick to combat the opioid epidemic include:

- Making naloxone (Narcan) available on every Natick Police and Fire Department vehicle and in every Natick Public School. The Natick Health Department also offers it at no cost to any resident who wants to carry it in order to reverse an opioid overdose. Training is provided with each kit that is distributed to the public and can be obtained during regular business hours at the Natick Health Department in Natick Town Hall, Monday through Friday. Natick is one of four communities in the Commonwealth dispensing Narcan and providing overdose prevention training directly to the public.
- Establishing a multi-sector Opioid Task Force to prevent and to reduce opioid addiction.
- Developing post-overdose follow-up protocols pairing specially trained law enforcement officers with South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC) recovery coaches, Justice Resource Center (JRI) Health and other local treatment providers to offer treatment and resources to Natick addresses at which an overdose has occurred.
- Conducting an ongoing summer workshop focusing on brain health and opioid awareness education for grades 3-10, and hiring of additional professionals to work directly with students who experience mental health or substance use related challenges and who works closely with counselors, social workers, school resource officers, teachers and administrators.
- Expanding screening for all students in the Natick Public Schools for depression, suicidality, drug and alcohol use.
- Implementing a Diversion Program, a partnership between the Natick Police, Natick Service Council and Natick Public Schools requiring students who violate drug or alcohol policies to participate in education, counseling and community service.
- Building more collaborative working relationships with MetroWest Medical Center and other local treatment providers to improve access to quality care for those who are seeking treatment.

- Hosting monthly Addiction Resource Center evenings (September-June) at the Natick Community Senior Center that include workshop topics on addiction and recovery as well as treatment navigation and Narcan training. Topics also include support for family members and loved ones who care about an individual struggling with addiction. The next resource center evening will take place on Monday, September 17th, 6:30-8:30 PM.
- Training and education for public safety staff, municipal staff and the general public about what resources exist for individuals and families experiencing addiction and how to access them.
- Assisting with the creation of The Journey, a monthly bereavement support group for individuals who are grieving the loss of a loved one due to substance use. The next Journey meeting will take place Tuesday, July 31st, 7:00-8:30 PM at the Natick Community Senior Center.
- Hosting community presentations for parents and youth through Natick Public Schools, SOAR (Supporting Outreach & Addiction Recovery) Natick, SPARK Kindness and Natick Together for Youth on topics related to substance use education and prevention.

We recognize that mental health and substance use disorders present complex challenges that require a collaborative approach within the community. If you or someone you care about is struggling with addiction, please contact Katie Sugarman, Prevention & Outreach Program Manager, Natick Health Department, at 508-647-6623, or go to www.NatickActs.org for more information on how to access services and support. For the biweekly meeting schedule for the SOAR Natick parent support group, please go to www.SOARNatick.org.

Melissa A. Malone
Town Administrator
13 East Central Street
Natick, MA 01760
508-647-6410