



NATICK BOARD OF HEALTH
13 East Central Street
Natick, MA 01760
508-647-6460 Fax 508-647-6466



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact Katie Sugarman
Prevention & Outreach Program Manager
508-647-6623
csugarman@natickma.org

Natick 180 Changes the Conversation about Addiction

On Monday, June 10, 2019, the Natick Board of Selectmen voted unanimously to support the creation of a new Natick-based coalition to prevent and reduce substance use disorder in Natick. The new Natick 180 Coalition will focus on preventing youth substance use before it starts, connecting individuals and families in Natick who experience substance use disorders to intervention and treatment services, and increasing recovery-oriented supports for individuals and families in Natick who are in recovery from addiction. The vote by the Board of Selectmen came after a presentation by Natick Health Director James M. White and Natick Police Chief James Hicks on behalf of the Natick Opioid Task Force, a municipal task force that began meeting in late 2016 in response to the opioid crisis that has impacted Natick as well as every other community in Massachusetts.

Natick 180 unites and integrates the work of the Natick Opioid Task Force with Natick Together for Youth (NTY), a community coalition that has worked on youth substance use prevention efforts for years. During the period of 2011-2016, NTY held the federal Drug Free Communities Grant from the U.S. Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the White House's Office of National Drug Control Policy, putting it in a unique position to host Natick's first opioid overdose prevention trainings in 2014. That year, NTY also led and co-sponsored the community's first annual vigil remembering those who lost their lives to substance use disorder, an event that continues to be held each December. Through its DFC funding, NTY has brought together a cross section of the community to plan and implement initiatives focused on preventing youth substance use. In 2018, NTY secured DFC funds for the second time.

In its three year existence, the Natick Opioid Task Force has led efforts to improve the community's response to individuals who experience opioid addiction. The Task Force started several new and innovative initiatives, including embedding a mental health clinician within the Natick Police Department, establishing a post overdose follow-up team to offer services to overdose victims and their families, creating a naloxone distribution program through the Natick Health Department, distributing thousands of resource and educational materials throughout the community, collecting nearly 2,000 pounds of unused medications through the medication disposal program, and supporting the creation of a bereavement group for families who have lost a loved one to addiction.

Natick 180 will continue the work started by these two organizations. During the summer of 2019, Natick 180 will bring on new staff and launch www.Natick180.org, a website that will be a hub of educational information and resources for community members spanning prevention to treatment and recovery. Natick 180 will also host several community education initiatives in the fall of 2019, starting with a presence at Natick Days and sponsoring the Hidden in Plain Sight bedroom display at the Natick Mall in September 2019. Additional information will be made available through the Town of Natick website and www.Natick180.org as it becomes available.

For additional information, please contact Katie Sugarman at 508-647-6623 or csugarman@natickma.org.