



**ACTION PLAN
TO ADDRESS THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC IN
THE COMMONWEALTH
— UPDATE —**

October 13, 2015

BASED UPON THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GOVERNOR'S OPIOID WORKING GROUP



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Prevention

- **July 13, 2015**, Department of Public Health (DPH) issued RFR to procure a new prescription monitoring program.
- **July 17, 2015**, Governor Baker filed the supplemental budget requesting \$27.8 Million to address the opioid crisis, \$5 Million of which is for prevention education initiatives ([H. 3676](#)).
- **July 17, 2015**, Legislation passed requiring PMP data to be submitted within 24 hours, [Section 89](#) of Chapter 46 of the acts of 2015.
- **July 22, 2015**, DPH sponsored a free training program, “Effectively Preventing Prescription Drug Misuse and Other Drugs,” for 138 participants to become certified in providing evidence-based substance use prevention curricula. Participants included school nurses, staff from school-based health centers, and other school personnel.
- **July 22, 2015**, Massachusetts Hospital Association published a [screening tool](#) packet for evaluating patients with a SUD, which supplements their [guidelines](#) for Emergency Department Opioid Management and the Emergency Department Opioid Management Patient [Information Sheet](#).



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Prevention

- **August 4 & 11, 2015**, Participants who attended the July 22 DPH training attended an additional day of training to become certified to teach either the “Botvin Life Skills” or “All Stars” evidence-based drug prevention program.
- **August 6, 2015**, Drug Formulary Commission held its first meeting.
- **August 19, 2015**, Massachusetts Medical Society published opioid therapy and physician communication guidelines and established FREE CME webinars on their website related to pain management and safely prescribing opioids.
- **August 28, 2015**, DPH posted targeted educational materials for parents about the risks of opioid use and misuse on their clearinghouse website.
- **September 2, 2015**, Governor Baker met with the Commonwealth’s medical school deans to discuss opportunities for coordinated trainings and best practices for medical students related to pain management and safe opioid prescribing.



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Prevention

- **September 14, 2015**, DPH and DESE staff met to evaluate school staff trainings for substance use prevention and to develop plans for future trainings. BSAS identified school districts not represented at the first set of trainings in August and conducted outreach to encourage their participation in the October trainings.
- **September 18, 2015**, Public Hearing held on new PMP regulations requiring pharmacists to submit prescription data within 24 hours.
- **September 26, 2015**, National Drug take-back day, more than 133 sites throughout the Commonwealth participated collecting prescription drugs that are no longer needed.
- **October 28 & 29, 2015**, DPH will sponsor a free training program for school nurses and other school personnel to become certified in providing evidence-based substance use prevention curricula.
- **November, 2015**, DCF/BSAS trainings on neonatal abstinence syndrome and addiction will commence.
- **November 4, 2015**, Public awareness campaign to reduce stigma will launch.



Intervention

- **July 17, 2015**, Legislation passed authorizing the bulk purchasing trust fund, Section 48 of Chapter 46 of the acts of 2015, which will improve the affordability of Narcan for cities and towns.
- **August 4, 2015**, DPH issued the August quarterly report for overdose death data to the public.
- **August 31, 2015**, Attorney General Maura Healey negotiated an agreement with Amphastar for \$325,000 to help offset the costs of Naracan. The payment will be deposited into the Commonwealth's Municipal Naloxone Bulk Purchase Trust Fund.
- **September 23, 2015**, DPH issued a letter to all pharmacies reaffirming their responsibility to distribute the Opioid Prescription Drug Fact Sheet, developed by DPH, with each Schedule II and III narcotic medication that is dispensed.



Intervention

- **September 25, 2015**, DPH Commissioner Bharel issued a letter to all prescribers encouraging the co-prescription of naloxone when an opioid is prescribed.
- **October, 2015**, BSAS will post RFR to create a pilot program allowing walk-in access to a trained clinician, in community-based outpatient provider settings, who can provide an emergent/urgent addiction assessment and direct referral to the appropriate level of care.
- **October, 2015**, BSAS will post a RFR to create a pilot program to make recovery coaches available in emergency departments in geographic areas identified as hot spots.
- **November, 2015**, DPH to issue guidance to cities and towns about how to utilize the Commonwealth's Municipal Naloxone Bulk Purchase Trust Fund.
- **January 31, 2016**, MassHealth will increase the capacity of ESP programs to meet the needs of people with addictions.



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Treatment

- **June 17, 2015**, 10 new adult residential service beds added in Westborough.
- **June 17, 2015**, 2 additional Clinical Stabilization Service beds added in Fall River.
- **July 1, 2015**, MassHealth implemented protocols to ensure that eligible individuals have MassHealth coverage upon release from incarceration.
- **July 10, 2015**, DPH issued an alert to all licensed and contracted substance use treatment service providers and stakeholders reinforcing and strengthening the requirement that all licensed addiction treatment programs **MUST** accept patients who are receiving medication assisted treatment (MAT).
- **July 17, 2015**, Governor Baker filed a \$27.8 Million supplemental budget requesting: \$5.8 Million to transfer women committed under section 35 of chapter 123 of the General Laws from MCI-Framingham to Taunton State Hospital for treatment; and \$3 Million for MassHealth to expand services for individuals with a SUD (H. 3676).



Treatment

- **July 20, 2015**, MassHealth began to implement protocols to fast-track MassHealth enrollment of DPH clients receiving detoxification services who do not have insurance. This is being piloted in four sites.
- **July 31, 2015**, Division of Insurance, in coordination with DPH & DMH, issued guidance on the implementation of the substance use disorder recovery law, chapter 258 of the acts of 2014.
- **August 5, 2015**, BSAS met with the Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers to encourage doctors to obtain DEA waivers that allow for the prescribing of buprenorphine.



Treatment

- **August 20, 2015**, MassHealth and DPH commit to the development and implementation of a statewide database of available treatment services, available via helpline and website. This project will be phased in:
 - **October 31, 2015**, inventory of available acute treatment service (ATS) beds, clinical stabilization service beds (CSS), and transitional support service (TSS) beds will be available via the helpline.
 - **December 31, 2015**, inventory of available ATS/CSS/TSS beds and Methadone clinics will be available via the website.
 - **January 31, 2016**, inventory of available Structured Outpatient Addiction Programs, Intensive Outpatient Programs, and Recovery Home beds will be available via the helpline and website.
 - **February 28, 2016**, inventory of primary care providers who prescribe MAT and opt-in will be available via the helpline and website.



Treatment

- **August 31, 2015**, Celticare removed prior authorization requirements for Suboxone, as a result of a MassHealth review of SUD treatment prior authorization policies across MassHealth to ensure consistency and to remove barriers to treatment.
- **August 31, 2015**, 125 new beds licensed by the Department of Mental Health added in Dartmouth.
- **September 1, 2015**, 11 additional detoxification (level 3.7 medically monitored) service beds added in Plymouth; 8 additional clinical stabilization service beds added in Plymouth.
- **September 4, 2015**, MassHealth notified all MCO's to remove prior authorization requirements for certain substance use treatment services, effective October 1, 2015.



Treatment

- **September 11, 2015**, 23 additional adult residential service beds added in Westborough.
- **September 17, 2015**, Federal Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Burwell announced that HHS will revise the regulations related to the prescribing of buprenorphine to treat opioid dependence. The regulation change will increase the number of patients that a doctor can treat with buprenorphine.
- **September 21 – 25, 2015**, MassHealth provided training to pilot sites on the process of fast-tracking the enrollment of uninsured patients, who are receiving ATS/CSS, in MassHealth or other insurance.
- **October, 2015**, BSAS will post RFR to increase the number of office-based opioid treatment programs in community health centers.
- **October 1, 2015**, 15 additional adult residential service beds added in Lowell.



Treatment

- **October 15, 2015**, MassHealth to issue policy guidance to its contracted health plans to reduce barriers to SUD treatment and to ensure uniform access MAT, to be followed by contract amendments.
- **November 14, 2015**, Mass League of Community Health Centers to hold a conference for its providers that will focus on safe prescribing and promoting physicians to obtain DEA waivers. This meeting will also include workshops led by physicians who are already prescribing Suboxone.
- **December, 2015**, 32 new ATS and 32 new CSS beds are scheduled to open in Greenfield.
- **Winter 2016**, 30 new secure section 35 treatment beds for women will open.
- **Spring 2016**, MassHealth will ensure that Outpatient Treatment Programs that dispense methadone have the ability to bill MassHealth for Buprenorphine and Naltrexone. This will expand access to MAT throughout the Commonwealth.



Recovery

- **July 17, 2015**, Governor Baker filed a \$27.8 Million supplemental budget, requesting \$14 Million to increase rates paid to recovery homes for individuals with a substance use disorder ([H. 3676](#)).
- **September 8, 2015**, The Recovery High School in Worcester opened for 2015/2016 school year.
- **October 1, 2015**, DPH awarded two contracts for the implementation of the voluntary sober home certification process by Winter, 2016.
- **October 16, 2015**, daily rate paid to recovery homes for individuals with a substance use disorder raised from \$75 per day to \$100.08 per day; rate will be paid retroactively to July 1, 2015.