



# TOWN OF IPSWICH

## DEPARTMENT of PUBLIC SAFETY

15 Elm Street  
IPSWICH, MASSACHUSETTS 01938

**Chief Paul A. Nikas**  
Director of Public Safety

(O) – 978-356-4343

(F) – 978-356-6625

January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016

To: Chairman Nishan D. Mootafian, Board of Selectmen

From: Chief Paul A. Nikas, Director of Public Safety

Re: Update on the Opioid Addiction Strategic Plan

Mr. Chairman & Members of the Board,

Prior to getting into the specifics about initiatives we have undertaken to address the Opioid Epidemic in Massachusetts, I wanted to provide the Board with the statistical breakdown of the opioid overdoses and deaths in Ipswich over the past three years.

YEAR	OPIOID OVERDOSES	OVERDOSE DEATHS	TIMES NARCAN WAS USED	AVE AGE OF PATIENT
2013	7	1	n/a	29
2014	11	4	3	31
2015	12	2	5*	31

\*2015 implementation

Some interesting facts become evident when you begin to analyze the data. Since the Department began implementing some of the initiatives outlined in the pages below, we have seen a **50% reduction** in overdose deaths in 2015 from 2014. This reduction should remove Ipswich from the “12<sup>th</sup>” spot on the State’s Public Health Department’s per capita rankings in 2014. While even one (1) death is too many, the department’s educational programs, informational packets and the implementation of NARCAN in 2015 seems to be having a positive impact. Future statistics will be monitored closely and our approach to this issue will be adjusted according to any new trends we discover.

I have prepared an update on the progress of initiatives we have made on the Ipswich Police Department’s strategic plan for combating opioid addiction in town. Our initiatives match or exceed the recommendations offered by the Massachusetts Municipal Association’s (MMA) recently-released report in all relevant categories. This MMA report, which was penned by the Municipal Opioid Addiction and Overdose Prevention Task Force, outlines ten (10) opportunities and recommendations for local leadership to follow in an attempt to address this statewide epidemic. I am proud to say the

Ipswich Police Department is ahead of the state curve and is already executing initiatives that address nine (9) out of ten (10) recommendations. We have not *created an innovated pilot program based on local needs (#5)* at this time. We do not have enough specific information to identified an “at risk” demographic for a program to target. As we continue to gather local information and continue to apply the initiatives describe below, an identifiable gap in our programs may become evident. If this scenario occurs, developing a innovative program to address this gap would be applicable.

As recommended by the MMA, the Police Chief has become the *designated municipal point person on substance abuse prevention (#2)*. In this role, I have drafted a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ipswich Police Department and the Healthy Gloucester Collaborative. The Collaborative has received a grant from the Department of Public Health’s Bureau of Substance Abuse Services and is actively seeking out additional sources of funding. This Collaborative is a regional approach at dealing with ALL addiction issues plaguing the Cape Ann region. It consists of Gloucester, Beverly, Rockport, Essex and Manchester-by-the-Sea. The charge of the Collaborative is to:

1. Participate with other local coalition and regional partners in developing a strategic plan for underage drinking and other drug use, and building on relationships and partnerships already in place among our Police Departments.
2. Work with Healthy Gloucester Collaborative and regional partners to accurately assess the underage drinking and other drug use problem in Ipswich including community assets and resources, gaps ins services, capacity and readiness to act.
3. Participate in regional efforts to implement or amend local policy, practice, systems, and environmental changes to prevent underage drinking and other drug use that emerge from the Strategic Planning Process.

In speaking with our new partners, the young adult population is the target group of the Collaborative’s effort, which does include opioid abuse prevention work. Even though it is still in the assessment phase of this current grant, it is readily apparent young adults will continue to be a key target group for future grant opportunities. Opioid issues will be addressed in this grant with prevention of first use as the focus. The Collaborative looks at substance use as a continuum from early youth use to continued use along the life cycle. So while preventing early use is the focus, attention to the continuum of use is addressed as one. Alcohol is highlighted because of the high correlation of early alcohol use with later drug abuse patterns, including marijuana abuse. I am looking forward to working with these new partners to address addiction through a regional approach and would ask the Town Manager, Health Agent and School District consider signing on to this Collaborative, as other municipalities have done.

The Ipswich Police, in a partnership with Representative Brad Hill and the Ipswich School District, designed and organizing a “Town Meeting” forum for parents and students on addiction, drug use recognition and education. The meeting was held at the IHS PAC on November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and had over 100 citizens in attendance. The event’s topics focused on recognizing the signs of drug use in children, various types and forms of drug use by teens/adolescents, the future trends in drug use and identified local resources for residents to access, if needed. We had numerous guest speakers address the audience, including a recovering addict and his family speaking about their experiences, a mother who

lost a child to an overdose, and a member of the State's Department of Health. We also had various Law Enforcement professionals educate people on what types of signs to look for in loved ones using drugs and struggling with addiction. ICAM filmed the event to run live on the local access channel and replayed the taped "Town Meeting" for those who could not attend. The event was a great success and our format is now being copied by other local communities on the North Shore. In conjunction with this multi-agency collaboration, Lt. Hubbard participated in an ICAM taped "Round Table" discussion on drug use and addiction issues with Representative Hill and other Law Enforcement professions from the area. This program was aired on local access television as well. Both of these initiatives addressed the MMA's recommendations to *take the lead to increase public awareness and engagement (#1)*, as well as *encouraged intra-community, regional and statewide collaboration (#3)*.

The Department created a dedicated Addiction Resource webpage "child" from the Ipswich Police main webpage. On this page are links and information on recovery programs, family support information, outreach programs and education programs. Most of these links tie back directly to partnerships the Ipswich Police have established with these resources. Additionally the Department has partnered with the Essex County Sheriff's Department's Opioid Task Force program which provides treatment and recovery resources to communities. These initiatives also address the MMA's recommendations to *take the lead to increase public awareness and engagement (#1)*, as well as *encouraged intra-community, regional and statewide collaboration (#3)*.

The MMA report recommends *publicizing the Good Samaritan Law (#6)*, which is currently being done on the Department's Addiction Resource page. As you know, an overdose is a life-threatening medical emergency. If 911 emergency responders are called quickly enough, in most cases, the person will survive. One of the major contributing factors to an overdose death is that many witnesses do not call 911 due to fear of police involvement. The 911 Good Samaritan law provides protection from drug possession charges when an overdose victim or an overdose witness seeks medical attention. This law helps reduce overdose deaths by removing barriers to calling 911 for medical assistance, a crucial step in saving the life of someone experiencing an overdose. The legislation does not protect individuals from being prosecuted for other offenses such as drug trafficking or weapons charges. This also does not protect individuals with outstanding warrants nor would it interfere with law enforcement protocols to secure the scene of an overdose.

As the MMA report stated, the adolescent brain, which continues to develop until age 25, is very susceptible to the influence of drugs and alcohol. Drug and alcohol use at a young age greatly increases an individual's risk for addiction later on in life. In an effort to reach the youth of Ipswich, we partnered with the School District to expand our D.A.R.E. program to include classes for 1st grade, 3rd grade, 6th grade & 7th grade. All material is age appropriate and designed to build on one another with the goal of educating school children on the dangers of drugs and building relationships between the children and the police. While drug prevention and education are a component of the programs, drugs are NOT the only topics for classes. Topics will also include, but not be limited to, how & when to call 911, street safety, "stranger" awareness and safety, bullying issues, sexting issues, peer pressures, and making good decisions. This initiative helped us meet the MMA recommendation of *partnering with schools to develop and implement programs aimed at intervention (#7)* and *to create a curriculum and education programs aimed at prevention (#8)*.

The Department created an informational card\* that educates the public on the signs of an opiate overdose, how to provide medical assistance to that person, where to acquire NARCAN for private use and where to seek help from local resources if a loved one has addiction issues. These cards are distributed to all officers for their dissemination to the public when a need is believed to exist. As an example, if an officer responds to a suspected overdose emergency, they will leave one of the cards behind at the scene as a future resource. These cards address the recommendation of the MMA to *develop a one-page resource guide for families and those seeking treatment or assistance (#4).*



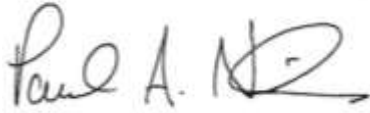
\*I would like to acknowledge Representative Brad Hill for printing these cards for the Department at no cost to the Town.

In August 2015, the Department partnered with Beverly Hospital to initiate the Ipswich Police Department Naloxone program. This program places NARCAN doses in every front line cruiser's medical bag. The Ipswich Police program, combined with the Ipswich Fire program and Action Ambulance protocols now ensures that all three tiers of first responders in Ipswich have NARCAN on hand to administer to a patient during an opiate overdose. These units were administered to patients five (5) times in 2015 and have already been administered three (3) times in 2016. Every patient in Ipswich who has received a NARCAN dose has survived. This is an obvious reason why the MMA recommends *providing first responders with naloxone to prevent overdose deaths (#9).*

For the past five years, the police station has housed a "drug drop-off" box in its lobby that is available to the public 24 hours a day. The "drop-off" box provides citizens with a safe location to dispose of unused or unwanted drugs. The box itself is a repurposed street mailbox from the post office. Each week, the box is emptied by an officer and the discarded drugs are brought to a local incinerator for disposal. Over the course of its operation, we have disposed of 500- 600 lbs of drugs, annually. This includes prescription drugs, over the counter drugs, illegal drugs and hypodermic needles. In its recent report, the MMA recommends municipalities *create a safe disposal site in our community for the discarding of prescription drugs (#10).*

So in conclusion, I believe the Ipswich Police Department has been proactive and forward thinking in our efforts to address ALL addiction issues in Ipswich. This assertion can be confirmed by all the initiatives we already have operating in Ipswich, which the MMA report recommends municipalities execute, prior to the report being issued. Additionally, other agencies have contacted me for information and help to get similar programs operating in their towns. However, I agree creating these initiatives are not the end of a program but a beginning. There is still much work to be done. New ideas and initiatives can be researched, including expanding some of these initiatives into other Town Departments. But from discussions with my peers, the Town of Ipswich is moving in the right direction and doing the best to our ability.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul A. Nikas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Chief Paul A. Nikas  
Director of Public Safety

Cc: Town Manger Robin Crosbie