

Harm Reduction in Worcester



WORCESTER
DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

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The City of
WORCESTER

City of Worcester: Harm Reduction

- Quality of Life team with homeless outreach and recovery coach
- Hub program
 - Coordinated mobilization of resources to address individuals or families facing acute levels of elevated risk
- Trafficked women initiatives
 - Living in Freedom Together (LIFT)
 - Diversion efforts
- Improving reentry upon release from Worcester County Jail
 - Sustainable connection to recovery services upon release
 - Narcan upon release
 - MAT treatment in jail upon release
- MAT induction as outpatient (bypassing detox)

City of Worcester: Other Initiatives

- **Prevention**

- Worcester Addresses Childhood Trauma (ACTs)
 - Trauma-informed family support for children under 10 and their families who have witnessed violence
 - Within 72 hours of a call to the police, a culturally competent Community Health Worker will help the family with emergent and long-term needs
- Worcester Public Schools collaboration to improve school climate
 - Reduce suspensions among Latino youth
 - Provide counseling and treatment for substance use

- **Reducing Stigma**

- “Addiction as a disease” training to all fire fighters, police, and other agencies to reduce stigma
- “Stigma-Free Worcester” phone app

- **Policy and Advocacy**

- MAT advocacy with the 14 largest health departments in Massachusetts
 - Mass Medical Society collaboration to advocate expanding MAT prescribing among physicians in the state
- Mayor’s Mental Health Task Force

Harm Reduction in Healthcare

- **UMass Memorial Medical Center**
 - **Psychiatry Department: Alan Brown, MD**
 - Referrals identification:
 - Reactively by requests from hospital staff
 - Proactively through the use of electronic algorithms that screen all admissions
 - **Emergency Department: Kavita Babu, MD**
 - ED-based MAT prescribing
 - Engaging GI and rheumatology regarding chronic pain treatment of patients with chronic pancreatitis
 - Further development of bridge service/clinic
- **Homeless Outreach and Advocacy Project (HOAP): Erik Garcia, MD**
 - Same day initiation of Suboxone/Vivitrol treatment
 - Helping women transition from the Chicopee Correctional Facility directly into MAT and counselling (collaboration with LIFT)
 - Providing medical and psychiatric care, substance abuse counselling and MAT to women who have been sexually trafficked
 - Addressing Hepatitis A outbreak with Worcester DPH
 - Providing immunizations, hand sanitizer and education in the city's shelters and detox facilities
- **Spectrum Health Systems: Jeff Baxter, MD, Chief Medical Officer**
 - Same-day methadone and buprenorphine treatment (no wait lists or turning patients away)
 - Treatment induction followed by continuation of treatment or connection to treatment resources in patients' home communities
 - Naloxone offered to every patient (both inpatient and outpatient campuses)



Harm Reduction in Community Organizations

- **Living in Freedom Together (LIFT): Nicole Bell, Chief Executive Officer**
 - Survivor support-person with lived experience providing direct care and case management
 - Narcan distribution to individuals in prostitution
 - Wound care kits and bleach/clean kit distribution
 - Immediate access to recovery supports and treatment
 - Reentry support for individuals at high risk of overdose and exploitation
 - Onsite medical care and MAT intakes
- **AIDS Project Worcester (APW): Michelle Smith, Executive Director**
 - Supply drop-off
 - Provide flyer and bleach kits to willing organizations and substance users
 - Post-overdose follow-up
 - APW staff team up with first responders and visit those who have survived an overdose
 - Information shared on APW's Syringe Services Program; Narcan enrollment; HIV, HCV, syphilis, gonorrhea and chlamydia testing; the Tuesday medical clinic; referrals to MAT or detox or treatment; linkage to Learning to Cope for family/friends
 - Transportation provided if the person is interested in detox or treatment

