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## **Middlesex County Restoration Center Commission secures \$1 million in state funding**

The Middlesex County Restoration Center Commission today announced it has secured \$1 million to fund the fourth year of a four-year pilot program designed to study and establish a restoration center in Middlesex County. The center would help support ongoing law enforcement diversion efforts across Middlesex County, while also expanding the community capacity for behavioral health treatment.

Thanks to the leadership of State Senator Cindy Friedman (D – Fourth Middlesex) and State Representative Ken Gordon (D – 21st Middlesex), the funding was included in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Fiscal Year 2022 budget passed this summer.

"We are extremely grateful to Senator Friedman and Representative Gordon for their incredible leadership in helping the commission secure this critical funding," said Commission Co-Chairs Middlesex Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian and Dr. Danna Mauch, President and CEO of the Massachusetts Association for Mental Health. "Law enforcement across Middlesex County has long recognized we cannot arrest and incarcerate our way out of the substance use and mental health challenges facing our communities. This center will provide law enforcement a location to divert individuals in crisis to receive immediate and appropriate behavioral health intervention, as well as function as a facility providing walk-in services for community members."

The funding will be used for costs associated with the launch of the center and implementation of services by a behavioral health provider.

"The state has made progress over the last few years to divert individuals with behavioral health conditions away from the criminal justice system and into treatment centers," said Senator Friedman. "This funding will allow the Commonwealth to continue this effort in Middlesex County and bring us one step closer to ending the criminalization of people suffering from an illness. I'm grateful to Representative Gordon for his collaboration in securing this funding in the budget, and to Sheriff Koutoujian and Danna Mauch for their continued support of this initiative."

“Incarceration is not a substitute for mental or behavioral health care,” said Representative Gordon. “The Middlesex County Restoration Center will help individuals experiencing crisis avoid incarceration and access appropriate health care. The ripple effect of helping these individuals benefits our entire community. I am deeply grateful to Senator Friedman, Sheriff Koutoujian, and Dr. Mauch for their leadership and tireless dedication to this goal.”

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