Harm Reduction in Worcester

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Worcester Commissioner of Health and Human Services
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