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COVID-19 Situation Report Summary June 4, 2020

Prepared by Debra L. McLaughlin, Coordinator, Opioid Task Force of Franklin County and the North Quabbin Region

Purpose

To provide a summary of the impact of COVID-19 upon entities providing services to those impacted by opioid and other substance misuse in Franklin County and the North Quabbin Region. (Note: We are aware that the scope of the MACC is restricted to the 26 towns of Franklin County.)

Summary of Themes

Below is a summary of key themes based on the above meetings and other outreach OTF has been a part of these past two weeks during the period of May 21 – June 3, 2020

1) Increased distribution of Narcan to first responders by Tapestry in collaboration with the Opioid Task Force.

- Email narcan@opioidtaskforce.org to obtain Narcan. Calls or texts can also be made to Tapestry's Mobile Outreach Line at 413-221-7722 between 10 AM - 2 PM, Monday through Friday.

2) Temporary quarters for Emergency Court Hearings.

- Since the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court extended their Order closing the courts, except for emergency hearings, until July 1, the Franklin County Sheriff's Office, in collaboration with the Massachusetts Executive Office of the Trial Court, and the Greenfield Police Department, have set up temporary quarters for emergency hearings to be conducted. A trailer, outfitted with electricity, HVAC, and Internet access, was set up on the grounds of the Franklin County Sheriff's Department, 160 Elm Street, Greenfield as of May 1. Judges, court clerks, lawyers, and defendants will have a safe and confidential space to process these cases quickly until it is deemed for the courts to safely re-open to the public.

3) The RECOVER Project and the North Quabbin Recovery Center to reopen in June.

- They are following the Governor's and/or the MA Department of Health's BSAS guidance for re-opening. Please consult their respective Facebook pages for more up-to-date information on how their peer recovery support services can be accessed online until they are open to the public. The technology gap remains.
 - The RECOVER Project: <https://www.facebook.com/TheRECOVERProject/>.
 - The North Quabbin Recovery Center: <https://www.facebook.com/NorthQuabbinRECOVERYcenter/>.

4) Tapestry is making plans to safely reopen using the guidance from Governor Baker's office and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. They are open M-F, 8:30 AM – 4 PM now.

- Please refer to their Facebook Page for further details regarding their available services.
<https://www.facebook.com/pg/TapestryWMass/posts/>.



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5) Homeless shelters at capacity; waiting list exists for the Wells Street Shelter.

- The Northampton Shelter, located at the Northampton High School, is closed. The Grove Street Shelter is full in Northampton, and there is a waiting list for the Wells Street Shelter.

6) Food insecurity remains an issue.

- The Stone Soup Café served 375 meals on May 30. They are seeking additional volunteer drivers, which involve contactless delivery. Please email Kirsten Levitt, the Executive Director at kirstenlevitt413@gmail.com for more information or to offer help.

7) Uptick in domestic violence calls, including the severity of calls, per the NWDA's Office.

- The NWDA has High-Risk Team, which gauges the likelihood of an individual getting killed by their intimate partner. They assess access to weapons, threats, suicidal ideation, restraining order violations, seeing an escalation in violence, violence during pregnancy, child abuse, the offender being unemployed, animal abuse, mental health issues, and non-fatal strangulation, among other factors.
- Danger Assessment Sheet: <http://ncdsv.org/images/DANGERASSESSMENT.pdf>.
- More info: <https://www.northwesternnda.org/domestic-violence>.
- NELCWIT 24/7 hotline: 24/7 crisis line: (413) 772-0806
- Toll free crisis number for Franklin County/North Quabbin : 1-888-249-0806
- NELCWIT: <https://www.nelcwit.org/home>
- 209A Fillable PDF Form: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/gl-c-209a-abuse-prevention-orderrestraining-order-application-forms/download>

8) Continued reports of fatal and non-fatal opioid and other drug overdoses in the region, especially in the North Quabbin remains a significant concern.

- Area hospital, EMS, and community health center not seeing an uptick in drug overdoses but the MA Department of Children and Families, and the courts are at this time. Other community reports of overdoses have been noted via community coalitions and task forces.

9) Continued reports of deaths by suicide and suicide attempts.

10) Continued reports of individuals in mental health crisis. Crisis services calls are down but have capacity to respond to calls.

11) Access to services for the most vulnerable and those who are unhoused continues to be a challenge across the region, especially in Greenfield where a minimum of 40 individuals are seen by Tapestry's mobile outreach team.

- OTF has created a resource sheet, which was shared broadly in the community with available outdoor, Wi-Fi hotspots, public restrooms, and port-a-potties and portable handwashing stations, along with other services such as Narcan access, pre-packaged foods/snacks, which can be found [here](#).
- Buckland has installed two port-a-potties. Outreach efforts have been made in Montague, Athol, and Orange.
- Athol considering placing port-a-potties but assessing appropriate locations and costs.



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- Outreach to FRTA has been made regarding potential installation of hand sanitizing stations along bus routes; effort is being researched to examine costs, maintenance, and ownership.
- The Wells Street Shelter has closed their warming shelter but they now have access to the second floor of the Wells Street Shelter to allow for social distancing that is required to keep their residents and staff safe.
- Two COVID-19 hotels exist in Northampton and in Pittsfield to house homeless individuals with COVID-19. Call 781-438-9254 between 7 AM and 7 PM to get information on how this hotel can be accessed. There is no current Franklin County capacity to house the homeless who exhibit COVID-19 symptoms or who may be diagnosed with COVID-19, and do not need hospital care to recover.
- Tents, sleeping bags, and pre-packaged clothing such as underwear/socks continue to be identified as needs.
- Water and pre-packaged, healthy snacks continue to be needed for unhoused/housing insecure people.
- Individuals/families who are court-involved and need free assistance, can contact the Franklin County Justice Court Service Center at 413-775-7483 or email at mary.klaes@jud.state.ma.us.
- The RECOVER Project's services are now provided remotely and they have a toll free warm phone line 844-699-4325, Monday-Friday, 9 am– 5 pm. Check their Facebook page for ongoing updates and a list of their virtual "All Recovery" meetings.
- The Living Room is open at 140 High Street in Greenfield where folks can do laundry, with soap provided, and take a shower. They are limiting the number of people who can be in the site due to safety. Please call ahead at 413-775-6760.
- The Western MA Recovery Learning Community at 20 Chapman Street, is still open for limited access to the bathroom, phone, and computer during open hours: Mondays-Wednesdays 12:30 pm-3:30 pm and Fridays 1 pm-5 pm. They are handing out water, snacks, and supplies out the door, 24/7 charging station and Wi-Fi access outside. They also now have portable chargers and a few phones preloaded with minutes and data. They have opened a site in Turners Falls at the Brick House Community Resource Center, 24 3rd Street, Turners Falls, MA, 413.824.8398, Tuesday & Thursday, 12PM-3 PM.
- Tapestry continues to provide services remotely and are eager to ensure organizations have Narcan on site.
- Sources for non-surgical masks for the general public, program participants, etc., are still needed.

NOTE: OTF has sharps containers in our office, with their inserts, that we could distribute for free to any municipality.

11) Uneven access to PPE, telephonic and telehealth services due to lack of phones, SIM cards, other technology (e.g. computers) and Wi-Fi for program participants and patients remain an issue.

- OTF created a resource sheet of available public Wi-Fi hotspots to share broadly in the community, which can be found [here](#). The digital divide remains a big issue, including digital literacy, devices, and connectivity.
- OTF is in the process of securing PPE for distribution, via a process, to community-based entities.

12) Detoxes, residential treatment, and supportive sober housing facilities remain generally open, with increased COVID-19 screening procedures for staff and residents. Separate areas are being set-aside to isolate individuals, as needed.



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13) DCF continues to report the removal of children due to opioid and substance misuse and overdoses.

- DCF staff are unable to provide home-based interventions before an overdose incident due to the probation of making home visits, unless it is an emergency.
- All DCF staff are tele-working and their work has been supported by volunteers, who are now reporting COVID-19 symptoms.
- DCF staff reporting parental overdoses, resulting in removal of children. Also reports of calls to DCF due to suicide attempts.

14) Coalitions/family resource centers serving families report increased family stress, especially for parents in early recovery.