



January 19, 2017

Four Heroin Deaths in Two Day Period

Fairfax County ended the last week of the year with four deaths from heroin overdoses in a two-day period. While we are not seeing the problem as acutely as other parts of Virginia or the country, we must face the fact that the opioid crisis is in our neighborhoods and schools. Please see some of my thoughts on how the county should be addressing this crisis.

Fairfax County Considering a Ban on Plastic Bags for Yard Waste

There is a county proposal to ban the use of plastic bags for collection of yard waste and requiring either paper bags or a reusable container. **This change/ban has not been approved by the Board of Supervisors and will be the subject of a public hearing on January 24 at 4:00.** I prefer that our residents continue to be given the choice to use paper, plastic, reusable containers or even biodegradable plastic bags. Please read below how you may participate in the Public Hearing.

Update on Illegal Signs in the Median

A few years ago, I worked with Delegate Dave Albo to change the state law. This change allowed Fairfax County to work with VDOT to enforce the ban on illegal signs in our roadways and also to start a compliance program in Fairfax County. The county is now assessing and collecting fines from serial repeat offenders.

Other Community Happenings

Please scroll down below to read about more initiatives in the community including:

- Police Civilian Review Panel: How to Apply
- Burke Historical Society First Quarter Meetings
- Community Meeting for Springfield and Braddock District Biking Improvements set for Jan. 24th

- Nominations are open for the 25th Annual Fairfax County Volunteer Service Awards
- A preview of Fairfax County's 275th Anniversary Celebration

Four Heroin Deaths in Two Day Period

"It's not in my neighborhood."

"I don't know anyone that does heroin."

"My child hangs out with a good group of friends."

The above are quotes from constituents when I tell them there are more opioid-related deaths than deaths from car accidents in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Fairfax County ended the last week of the year with four deaths from heroin overdoses in a two day period. While we are not seeing the problem as acutely as other parts of Virginia or the country, we must face the fact that the opioid crisis is in our neighborhoods and schools. Addiction is happening to good students, parents, star athletes, and in the cases above, our more affluent neighborhoods.

The real question is: "what are we doing to address the crisis?" Below are some of my thoughts, initiatives and suggestions - there is no one answer and I would appreciate any thoughts you have.

Reduce the availability of prescription opioids. Over 75% of heroin users start with prescription drugs - once hooked, they go to heroin when they are unable to afford the expensive pills. I worked with Delegate Tim Hugo to have HB 1885 introduced in this year's Virginia legislative session. It would limit the amount opioids prescribed unless there are compelling circumstances and require reporting of the information in the Prescription Monitoring Program. I have personally witnessed too many large opioid prescriptions written for minor surgery or incidents. The growth in the total opioid death rate closely tracks the growth in opioid prescriptions given.

Return Drug Counselors to the Schools. As I meet with high school principals, one of the budget cuts that significantly impacted them was removing the county-funded CSB Drug Counselors from our schools. Much like the FCPD School Resource Officers (SROs), placing the drug counselors in the schools allowed them to develop relationships with students and better learn what is going on in the schools so they can address issues head-on. I proposed returning the drug counselors to the schools to my colleagues on the Board of Supervisors after my first Town Hall on the crisis back on May 3. The idea was referred by the Board of Supervisors to a joint School Board/Board of Supervisors committee that has been looking at the best way to address the issue in schools. A recommendation is anticipated shortly.

Provide for Convenient Disposal of Unused Drugs. Did you know that your medicine cabinet is a potential source to obtain illegal prescription drugs? A single Oxycodone pill can garner up to \$80 on the street, or school hallways. It is important to get unused medicines, especially opioids, out of your medicine cabinets to prevent accidental or illicit use. The FDA has a [useful website](#) for the disposal of unused

drugs. While most people are uncomfortable flushing opioids down the toilet, the FDA approves of this method of disposal if DEA approved collection sites are not available. The DEA and Fairfax County Police Department hold very successful semiannual drug take back programs. Several other jurisdictions (including Loudoun County, Virginia Beach, Leesburg, and Northumberland County) have drug collection boxes available for daily prescription drug drop off. CVS provides the collection boxes which are located at police stations or Sheriff offices. At the Board of Supervisors meeting on January 24th, I will be asking the Board to have our Police Department take another look at participating in the program and to publicize the current methods of disposal.

Another option for disposing of prescription drugs is medication disposal bags. These are available from the CSB and we have a supply in the Springfield office.

Improve the availability of treatment in Northern Virginia. One of the concerns I have heard from residents is the difficulty in finding the necessary resources, either private or public, to get the help they need. There is a shortage of both private and public residential treatment facilities and recovery programs in Northern Virginia, and many have waiting lists. One of the four deaths during the two day period mentioned above was a young woman that was one day away from her scheduled entry into a recovery program. If you or someone you know is in need of help, a good starting place is the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB), which provides walk in services. You can call **703-324-7000** for more information. After a screening, they can put you in touch with the appropriate private or public resources.

Provide additional resources to the Police Department. While addiction is a disease that needs medical treatment, we need to pursue and prosecute those that prey on those that suffer from addiction. While the majority on the Board of Supervisors seem focused on spending vital resources "re-engineering our Police Department" (the same police department that makes Fairfax County the safest jurisdiction of our size in the country), I think we need to prioritize those resources on more critical issues, including additional police resources to deal with the opioid epidemic.

Educate our Residents. The opioid crisis has been dubbed a public health crisis at the national level and a public health emergency at the state level. Yet, there is still the feeling by many community members that addiction does not happen in their neighborhood. As I speak with HOAs and community associations across the county, our residents express disbelief at the scope and extent of the national and local problem. [WTOP](#) and [NBC4](#) both have a broadcast series on the crisis and [I have hosted several town halls](#) on the issue to help educate the public. It is my hope that educating our community on the scope of opioid addiction will help someone you know avoid it. Once addicted to opioids, it is a long, difficult and almost impossible road to recovery.

Fairfax County Considering a Ban on Plastic Bags for Yard Waste

My office has heard from a number of residents and HOAs regarding a county proposal to ban the use of plastic bags for collection of yard waste, instead requiring either paper bags or a reusable container. This change/ban has not been approved by the Board of Supervisors. Unfortunately, it has been advertised that this change will go into effect on July 1, when in fact the Board has not yet had a Public Hearing to hear from our residents or made a decision.

While plastic bags cause some difficulty and expense in the recycling process, I believe a plastic bag ban would also have a significant impact on residents and may encourage illegal disposal of yard waste. There are also questions regarding the cost, availability and durability of paper bags. Based on what I know today, I prefer that our residents continue to be given the choice to use paper, plastic, reusable containers, or even biodegradable plastic bags as they choose.

If you have strong feelings on this subject, **I ask that you attend the public hearing next Tuesday, January 24th scheduled for 4:00 PM.** Please [click here](#) for more information. **If you cannot attend, please reply to this email with your feedback, thoughts, and concerns.**

Update on Illegal Signs in the Median

In 2013, I worked with Delegate Dave Albo to change the state law on signs in the median. This change allowed Fairfax County to work with VDOT to enforce the ban on illegal signs in our roadways and also to start a compliance program in Fairfax County. Except for a number of serial repeat offenders, the program has largely kept signs out of our medians. I have been particularly impressed with the self-policing that has been done by both political parties to keep campaign signs out of the medians during the last few election seasons. Illegal signs are a blight on our community and can be a safety hazard.

In 2016, the Board approved action to take the serial offenders to court to collect the fines they had accumulated. I am pleased to report that these actions have resulted in further compliance and cleaner roadways. For more information on the illegal sign removal program, please [click here](#).

At the Board of Supervisors meeting on January 24, the Board will consider assessing a fee on illegal signs to defray the cost of illegal sign removal. It is my hope that the scale of the program will be reduced in the near future as we gain compliance from the serial offenders.

Police Civilian Review Panel: How to Apply

Although I voted against the creation of the Police Civilian Review Panel (CRP), I wanted to share how someone can apply to be a member. If you or someone you

know is interested in serving on the Police CRP, please submit a copy of that individual's resume and a 1-2 page cover letter explaining how the nominee fits the criteria set forth by the Board for the Panel. This letter and resume must be received by the Office of Clerk to the Board of Supervisors, no later than January 31, 2017. Supervisors will not have individual appointments to the CRP, but members will be approved by a vote of the Board.

To submit a resume and cover letter, or to answer any questions, you may contact the Clerk to the Board of Supervisors, Attn: Catherine Chianese, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 533, Fairfax, VA 22035, or email ClerktotheBOS@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Burke Historical Society First Quarter Meetings

Annual Meeting: "The 1898 Looting of Burke"

Sun., Jan. 29, 4:30 p.m.; Abiding Presence Lutheran Church, 6304 Lee Chapel Road, Burke

Please join us for the Annual Meeting of the Burke Historical Society! We'll share a brief summary of the Society's activities over the past year and our plans for 2017, followed by an engaging lecture. Cindy Bennett, BHS Treasurer, will speak on the 1898 looting of Burke by troops from Camp Alger during the Spanish-American War.

Research Seminar: "Researching Slavery in Court Records"

Tue., Feb. 7, 7:00 p.m.; Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke

Curious about the history of enslaved African-Americans in Fairfax County? Heather Bollinger, assistant archivist at the Fairfax Circuit Court Historic Records Center, will explain how the Center is creating a slavery index from county records. Registration on the Fairfax County Public Library required.

General Meeting: "Jazz in and Around Burke, Part 3"

Sun., Feb. 26, 3:30 p.m.; Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Rd, Burke

For our first meeting at Pohick Regional Library, Brian Slawski, BHS Vice President and Programs Chair, will conclude his series on jazz in Northern Virginia and the District, past and present, with a look at local jazz festivals, instruction, and radio.

General Meeting: "Life in Burke in the 1950s and '60s"

Sun., Mar. 26, 3:30 p.m.; Pohick Regional Library

Siblings Chip and LaVerne Carson, fifth-generation Burkites, will share some of their own and their family's experiences in "Old Burke." The Carson legacy includes public service at Belle Aire School, the fire department, and the post office; operation of Carson's Trading Post; and perseverance through the fight over Burke airport.

Community Meeting for Springfield and Braddock District Biking Improvements set for Jan. 24th

Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) will host a community meeting to discuss two proposed bicycle improvements in Springfield and Braddock Districts

on Tuesday, Jan. 24, 2017, 6:30-8 p.m., in the cafeteria of Irving Middle School, 8100 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. As part of the Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT) [2017 repaving program](#), bicycle infrastructure improvements are proposed for the following areas:

- * Greeley Boulevard from Carrleigh Parkway to Old Keene Mill Road.
- * Hillside Road from Rolling Road to Old Keene Mill Road.

To view a map of the proposed project areas, please [click here](#).

Nominations are Open for the 25th Annual Fairfax County Volunteer Service Awards

Volunteer Fairfax proudly presents the 2017 Fairfax County Volunteer Service Awards on Friday, April 21. The community is invited to submit nominations for the outstanding volunteer(s) in your organization, club, school, library or neighborhood! Information is available at www.volunteerfairfax.org. The nomination deadline is February 3. The awards breakfast will take place at the Waterford in Springfield from 8-10 am. Tickets will be available in March.

A Preview of the Fairfax County 275th Anniversary Celebration

2017 will bring a full year of celebration in honor of Fairfax County's 275th anniversary!

Fairfax County was founded in 1742, and to mark this historic occasion, a signature celebration will be held on the Historic Fairfax Courthouse grounds on Saturday, June 17, 2017, from 10 am to 4 pm. Entertainment will include family-friendly activities, history exhibits, performances, and more. This event is FREE and open to the public.

Please visit www.Fairfax275.com for more information and events. Stay tuned for more information about the Fairfax County 275th Anniversary Commemoration!