

Response to Questions on the FY 2018 Budget

Request By: Supervisor Gross

Question: Please provide information about what is being done in terms of a regional response as it pertains to the opioid epidemic.

Response: There are several efforts underway to combat the opioid epidemic, including national, state, regional and local initiatives. The summary below is intended to provide insights into state, regional and local activities. However, because of the dynamic nature of the situation and ongoing efforts, it should be noted that the summary is subject to change.

State Efforts

In Virginia, the Governor's Executive Leadership Team on Addiction (GELTA) is co-chaired by the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, William A. Hazel, MD and the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, Brian J. Moran. The effort was established in December of 2016 through Executive Directive 9 (<https://governor.virginia.gov/media/8166/ed-09-establishing-the-governor-s-executive-leadership-team-on-opioid-abuse-and-addiction.pdf>). Efforts include *State Support Action Groups* focused on situational awareness and best practices at the state level and *Local Support Action Groups at the local level*.

Locally, the Health Department (HD), Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB), and Virginia State Police participate in local support action groups for the GELTA. The local support groups develop community coalitions, track needs and activities, and promote best practices in regards to opioid and prescription drug use.

Regional Efforts

District of Columbia Mayor Muriel Bowser, Maryland Governor Larry Hogan, and Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe recently signed the "National Capital Region Compact to Combat Opioid Addiction." The compact is intended to help spur cross-jurisdictional collaboration related to the opioid epidemic. In support of this compact, several partners have joined with the Metropolitan Council on Governments to sponsor a Regional Opioid Summit on May 9th (<https://www.mwcog.org/newsroom/2017/03/15/sharon-zalewski-cross-jurisdictional-collaboration-key-to-addressing-the-regions-opioid-epidemic/>).

- Dr. Gloria Addo-Ayensu (HD) and Lyn Tomlinson (CSB) serve on the planning committee for the Regional Opioid and Substance Abuse Summit taking place on May 9, 2017.
- The Regional Opioid & Substance Abuse Summit will highlight ongoing opioid and substance abuse work and encourage better regional alignment on these efforts. Speakers include Mayor Muriel Bowser, Governor Larry Hogan, and Governor Terry McAuliffe. Dr. Addo-Ayensu is also moderating a session on confronting the stigma of drug addiction.
- As always, Fairfax County law enforcement works across jurisdictions to investigate opioid cases and make arrests.

- The Fire and Rescue Department (FRD) notes that current regional response to opioids is predominantly reactive (e.g., response to an overdose).

Local Efforts

In addition to the initiatives discussed above, local efforts to combat the epidemic continue.

Prevention, Education and Programming:

- The Department of Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS) partners with the Unified Prevention Coalition (UPC) of Fairfax County, the Police Department, and local pharmacies to promote semi-annual drug takeback events. The next event takes place on April 29, 2017.
- UPC implements ongoing community education programs such as Saturday Night in the Suburbs, PROTECT, and other signature community education programs.
- Operation medicine cabinet clean out is offered in partnership with several public and private agencies. This is a well-publicized effort to encourage residents to properly dispose of medications, particularly unused opioids.
- Through Partners in Prevention, NCS provides community-based organizations with funds to implement Life Skills Training, an evidence-based substance use prevention program.
- Fairfax County Public Schools revised health curriculum has a focus on current issues and risk factors related to opioid addiction. NCS has implemented a similar approach with the Towards No Drugs program.

Planning and Coordination:

- NCS's opioid addiction prevention task force will reconvene this spring. The group originally developed educational materials on what to do if a loved one overdoses and what kinds of treatment options are available. Moving forward, they will evaluate what is being done at the state, local, and national levels to avoid duplicating efforts.

Capacity Building for Response and Treatment:

- The CSB developed specialized outpatient programming to address individuals who are addicted to opioids.
- Residential treatment programs have been modified with a shorter length of stay to accommodate more individuals and decrease time on the waiting list.
- After receiving safe medication disposal kits from the state, HD distributes these to the CSB. These kits are given to individuals taking the naloxone training as well as distributed at community events for free.
- Naloxone trainings are offered free of charge to all County residents. Individuals who are unable to pay for the naloxone can receive the medication for free.

- All residential substance abuse treatment programs offer the naloxone training to individuals in treatment and their family and friends. Again, if individuals cannot afford the medication, the medication is provided and paid for by the CSB.
- The CSB and its partner agencies offer naloxone training and a train-the-trainer so that training in the use of naloxone could be sustained.
- FRD endorses the Mental Health First Aid course where mental health crisis and the frequent nexus to substance abuse is discussed. More than 250 FRD personnel have been trained in Mental Health First Aid as of March 31, 2017.
- FRD tracks data on responses related to suspected or known opioid use. Data from calendar year 2016 is available upon request.
- Fairfax County law enforcement, the CSB, and commonwealth attorney regularly partner to divert individuals arrested for use/possession of opioids in order that the individual is able to obtain treatment in lieu of incarceration.
- Individuals using any type of opiate are a priority population for CSB with walk-in access available to these individuals.

Messaging, Media and Communications:

- The CSB developed overdose prevention cards and these cards are provided and reviewed with all CSB clients. Additionally, these cards are shared with other agencies and jurisdictions, and provided to individuals who are arrested for opioid related offenses.
- Various County agencies have participated in media campaigns and community presentations around the opioid epidemic. These media presentations have been on television, radio, in-person at community events, and in print.
- A County website was developed and is regularly updated to provide residents with information about opioids/heroin (<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/csb/heroin-opiates/>).