



PRESS RELEASE

FRANKLIN COUNTY GOVERNMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:
David S. Keller, Commissioner
dskeller@franklincountypa.gov
(717) 261-3812

State Recognizes Franklin County Jail Program as Model for other Counties *Program Increases Success for Inmates with Opioid and Alcohol Use Disorder, Reduces Return to Jail*

July 10, 2018 – Chambersburg, PA – A year and a half ago, the Franklin County Jail partnered with PrimeCare to begin a medication assisted treatment program to help incarcerated individuals with substance use issues. On average, 27% of those coming into the jail are put on a detox protocol, and of those, about 1 out of 4 is due to opioid use.

“We have an opioid problem and an alcohol problem in our county,” stated Commissioner and Prison Board Chairman, Bob Thomas at Tuesday’s Franklin County Prison Board Meeting.

Deputy Warden Michelle Weller and Justin Lensbower, Health Services Administrator of PrimeCare, presented information and outcomes regarding the Jail To Community Treatment Program to the Prison Board. The program offers counseling services and two doses of Vivitrol to participants prior to their release from jail, and continues treatment and medications in the community after release. [Vivitrol is an injectable medication used to reduce and suppress cravings for alcohol and/or opiate drugs.]

“Franklin County’s program is very different from other programs. The biggest key to success is the amount of treatment and Vivitrol given prior to release. The second shot is significant and is a key to the program’s success,” said Warden Bill Bechtold. “The jail staff meets weekly with representatives from Drug and Alcohol, Mental Health, Adult Probation and other departments to review potential participants,” he said. “These things make our program really successful.”

Deputy Weller explained that participants must be eligible for work release to be part of the program. Participants generally have a long-standing history of drug and alcohol use, have been involved in the criminal justice system and have unsuccessfully attended rehabilitation centers.

The focus is more on counseling and less on medication. Program participants receive 4 -6 weeks of counseling prior to getting their first injection. Though it depends upon the individual, on average participants receive 12 weeks of counseling while in the jail. According to Mr. Lensbower, this sets participants up for success upon their release due to the connections created and trust built with community providers.

“This program is better for the participant, for their families, and for us when they are successful. It’s all about change,” stated Commissioner Thomas.

For additional information on Franklin County visit www.franklincountypa.gov.

Success of the Jail To Community Treatment Program is measured by how many participants remain out of jail, regardless of charges. “We view success as all encompassing,” said Mr. Lensbower. Program success can also be attributed to the participant selection process. “This is a voluntary program,” stated Mr. Lensbower, “They have to request participation and be motivated for treatment.” A typical success rate for this type of program would be around 60%. Franklin County community providers are measuring Franklin County’s success rates at 66% (Pyramid) and 81% (Keystone).

The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC) has taken notice. Recently, DOC representatives visited the jail to observe the program with plans to use the Franklin County model for other counties. PrimeCare is considering using the model in many of their 70 other facilities along the east coast.

“With the Department of Corrections using the program as a model across PA and PrimeCare expanding the Franklin County model to many of their other sites, hopefully others can benefit as much as we have from this promising program,” stated Commissioner Chairman Dave Keller.

Two years of research and preparation allowed jail staff and PrimeCare to be ready to implement the Jail To Community Treatment Program when the Franklin County Criminal Justice Advisory Board was presented with a grant opportunity in late 2016. The Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) grant from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency funded in-jail medication assisted treatment. Another grant from the Department of Corrections (DOC) added the community component to the program. The program is currently anticipating a second grant opportunity from the DOC, and in the meantime, is funded by Act 198 money received from fees assessed to alcohol-related offenders to be used for offender treatment.

Please visit www.franklincountypa.gov for more information.

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