



## MAYOR DAVID J. NARKEWICZ

City of Northampton

Office of the Mayor

210 Main Street Room 12

Northampton, MA 01060-3199

(413) 587-1249 Fax: (413) 587-1275

mayor@northamptonma.gov

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### **CITY OF NORTHAMPTON HEALTH DEPARTMENT AWARDED \$550,000.00 GRANT TO ADDRESS OPIOID MISUSE AND ABUSE IN HAMPSHIRE COUNTY**

**January 14, 2015**

The City of Northampton is pleased to announce that the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) Bureau of Substance Abuse (BSAS) has awarded the City with a \$550,000 grant to address opioid misuse, overdoses and addiction.

The dramatic rise of opioid related deaths in Massachusetts led Governor Deval Patrick to declare a public health emergency in March of 2014. Governor Patrick outlined steps to address the opioid epidemic, which included the commitment of \$20 million to increase prevention, treatment and recovery services. The opioid epidemic is a full-blown public health crisis that cuts across geographic, social, racial and economic boundaries. Hampshire County has seen a sharp increase in opioid related incidents and in response, the City of Northampton has partnered with the City of Easthampton, South Hadley, Belchertown, Ware, Pelham and Amherst to work on this initiative. "Working with surrounding communities and receiving this grant is a key first step to combating the opioid crisis facing all western Massachusetts cities and towns," said Mayor David Narkewicz.

This new community partnership, the Hampshire Opioid Abuse Prevention Collaborative (HOAPC), will work closely with the Northwestern District Attorney's Office and other community agencies to identify strategies to address the opioid epidemic and to strengthen and support the infrastructure needed to help prevent addiction and overdose. The city's Public Health Director, Merridith O'Leary will manage this grant and coordinate efforts with the partnering communities and other stakeholders. "This grant will enable the City of Northampton Health Department to hire a full-time coordinator to assess the scope of the problem in the participating Hampshire County communities and to identify and expand resources for education, data collection, overdose prevention, and treatment access," said O'Leary.