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Press Release



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Governor Hassan, James Vara and State Agencies Present Update on State's Response to Heroin and Opioid Crisis

Update Highlights Efforts to Implement Comprehensive Strategy to Combat the Crisis, Outlines Additional Complementary Steps

Continuing her efforts to combat the heroin and opioid epidemic in New Hampshire and help save lives, Governor Maggie Hassan today hosted a press conference with the Governor's Advisor on Addiction and Behavioral Health, James Vara, state agency heads and advocates, where they presented an update on the State's comprehensive response to the heroin and opioid health crisis and complementary recommendations to continue to build on the State's efforts.

"The heroin and opioid crisis is the most serious public health and safety issue of our time, devastating families, communities and businesses across New Hampshire," Governor Hassan said. "Working together, we have been focused on a comprehensive strategy to support law enforcement and strengthen prevention, treatment and recovery. Today's update outlines the progress that we've made together in implementing that strategy, as well as some recommendations that can be taken over the coming months to build on our efforts. We will have to continue to fight together every single day to combat this crisis and help save lives."

"Since entering this role, I have met with stakeholders across the state – including the substance use disorder and behavioral health community, public safety officials, educators and engaged citizens and families – working to bring them all together to coordinate efforts to combat this crisis," said James Vara. "This update offers insight into where we have been as a state in dealing with substance misuse, and where we need to go in order to save lives and continue building a stronger, healthier and safer New Hampshire."

The State's comprehensive approach to combat the heroin and opioid crisis in New Hampshire includes supporting law enforcement and strengthening prevention, treatment and recovery services. This year, the Governor has signed bipartisan legislation cracking down on fentanyl, establishing a statewide grant program to assist local law enforcement in seizing illicit drugs and arresting dealers, limiting prior authorization requirements for treatment, making improvements to New Hampshire's prescription drug monitoring program, requiring all prescribing boards to update prescribing rules for opioids, establishing a statewide drug court program, providing funding to upgrade technology for the prescription drug monitoring program and providing \$5 million in additional resources for prevention, treatment and recovery as well as supportive housing.

In addition, the Governor fought to reauthorize the bipartisan New Hampshire Health Protection Program, which has provided substance misuse and behavioral health services to thousands of Granite Staters, and she has worked to revise licensing requirements to make it easier for providers to open treatment facilities, to increase the safe and effective use of Narcan, to increase medication-assisted treatment in New Hampshire and to launch a statewide substance misuse hotline to help connect individuals with resources 24 hours a day, seven days a week. She has also signed bipartisan bills allowing drug take-back programs at pharmacies, simplifying the licensing process for alcohol and drug abuse counselors who move to New Hampshire and requiring public schools to include drug and alcohol education as part of their health education curriculum.

The update also provides additional, complementary strategic recommendations that build on the framework of the State's coordinated response to address the crisis for individuals, families and communities across the state. These include: coordinating efforts to allocate available resources as efficiently and quickly as possible; continuing to increase access to medication-assisted treatment; establishing a needle exchange program specific

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to New Hampshire's needs; maximizing the effective utilization of the prescription drug monitoring program; advancing workforce initiatives; and establishing a committee to analyze data and trends in the epidemic to ensure that resources are being allocated as effectively as possible, which the Governor said she will soon create through an Executive Order.

"We have done important work together to implement our comprehensive strategy, but that work is not done," Governor Hassan said. "With that in mind, per a recommendation in this update, I will soon establish a committee through an Executive Order to analyze data and trends in the epidemic to ensure that resources are being allocated as effectively as possible."

[The full text of the update](#) 

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