



For Immediate Release

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OTF Co-Chairs Laud Federal Action Declaring Opioid Epidemic a National Emergency

President Trump to enact top recommendation from President's Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis

Greenfield, MA (August 11, 2017) - The Opioid Task Force (OTF) of Franklin County and the North Quabbin Region's leadership praised President Trump's decision to declare the opioid epidemic a national emergency yesterday.

John F. Merrigan, Franklin County Register and OTF Co-Chair said, "This is something we've been working on for years as we've seen first hand the devastation opioids can cause to families and to our community. We look forward to seeing the results in terms of resources allocated to address this epidemic."

"Having additional federal resources can only enhance our local efforts," noted **Sheriff Chris J. Donelan** and OTF Co-Chair. "With the recent \$100,000 grant from Governor Baker's administration, we will continue to implement effective treatment and recovery strategies for those impacted by opioids at the Franklin County House of Correction."

Northwest District Attorney **David E. Sullivan** said, "This is heartening news. We look forward to working with our federal and state partners to do everything we can to address the opioid crisis across our rural region. Additional funding can certainly help support our existing initiatives."

President Trump enacted the top recommendation to declare the opioid epidemic a national emergency from the draft [interim report](#) issued by his [Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis](#), released on July 31, 2017, of which Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker is a member. The Commission recommended that the President use his powers, under the Public Health Service Act or the [Stafford Act](#), which would allow the federal and state governments to more rapidly respond to national emergencies.

According to [data](#) from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, drug overdose deaths due to opioids now exceed deaths as a result of gun violence or car accidents. The Commission's draft interim report also noted that 142 Americans are dying daily from drug overdoses. As a result, the federal government is in a position to better harness its resources to support states in their efforts to combat the epidemic.

This will further support Massachusetts' efforts to increase treatment and recovery services where \$185.3 million has been allocated to address substance misuse in the FY18 Massachusetts State Budget, an increase of over 50% since FY15.

About the Opioid Task Force: Formed in September 2013, the Opioid Task Force of Franklin County and the North Quabbin Region has over 300 members working together to help reduce opioid and heroin addiction, prevent overdose deaths, and improve the quality of life in the region through its prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery initiatives and committees. More information about the work of the Opioid Task Force can be found at:

Website: www.opioidtaskforce.org

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