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## **Plainsboro Announces New Drug Assistance and Recovery Program**

*Key stakeholders work together to provide assistance for those in need*

**PLAINSBORO, NJ**, January 19, 2018 - Now, more than ever, drug use and addiction is a major national, state and local problem that impacts us all on multiple levels. Individuals, families, and communities bear the many ill-effects that the crisis has imposed on our safety, health and the economy.

The alarming reality of this widespread opioid epidemic has created an urgent need to work together as a community to reverse these trends. According to the Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 175 Americans die every day from drug overdoses.

In response, Mayor Cantu, the Plainsboro Township Committee and the Plainsboro Police Department are implementing a new program; Community Addiction Recovery Effort (C.A.R.E.).

The C.A.R.E. initiative is a network of community stakeholders who will facilitate education, prevention and improve access to treatment and recovery support for those struggling with drug addiction. The program ensures help for those seeking assistance without fear of arrest or prosecution.

According to Mayor Peter Cantu, "Our loved ones affected by addiction must have a way to seek assistance and obtain it. Strengthened relationships between the community, its leaders and the police department allows the C.A.R.E. program to assist people in need, reduce crime, and build a better community".

The Plainsboro Police Department will work to remove the stigma associated with addiction and implement recovery as part of the investigation and arrest processes. According to Plainsboro Police Chief Guy Armour, "In addition to ensuring victim restitution and the filing of appropriate complaints, we will begin screening arrested individuals for participation in the C.A.R.E. program and match individuals with a certified recovery coach who will serve as a personal guide and mentor to recovery".

Access to the recovery mentorship program is completely voluntary and offered to all persons suspected of suffering from any drug or alcohol addiction. In addition, Court proceedings will be postponed during the recovery process and the police will monitor the individual's overall recovery progress. Before starting the referral initiative, staff from Recovery Advocates of America, (a non-profit organization) will meet with individuals at the Township to share their stories of addiction and recovery.

“The Township is fully dedicated to the health and safety of the community by educating our officers as an additional step in furthering this initiative. We empathize with addiction and view it as a disease rather than a crime”, Chief Armour said.

The program was designed at the request of the Plainsboro Township Committee. The police, Mayor and Committee met with community leaders to discuss the need for such a program and how best to approach it. Meetings were held with addiction recovery specialists, police officers and faith based organizations including the Princeton Alliance Church, First Presbyterian Church of Plainsboro, and the Queenship of Mary Church. Other meetings were held with the Princeton Medical Center at Plainsboro, the West Windsor-Plainsboro School District, Recovery Advocates of America, and the Plainsboro Municipal Court Judge and Public Defender.

At the start of the 2017-2018 school year, Lieutenant Fred Tavener and Juvenile Detective Scott Beatty of the Plainsboro Police Department launched the #NotEvenOnce opiate and addiction education program at West Windsor-Plainsboro High School North as part of the senior health class. #NotEvenOnce focuses on educating young adults about the path to addiction and the associated warning signs so that they can make safe and responsible decisions during their final year of high school and beyond. Officers of the Manchester Police Department in Ocean County, NJ developed the curriculum and certified ten of our officers to present the material in Plainsboro. Additionally, Recovery Advocates of America assisted the officers by providing a “real world” perspective of the growing epidemic happening all around us.

If you would like more information about the Plainsboro C.A.R.E. initiative go the Plainsboro Township's webpage at [www.plainsboronj.com](http://www.plainsboronj.com). Those seeking assistance call 609-799-2333 or email [CARE@plainsboronj.com](mailto:CARE@plainsboronj.com)

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Plainsboro Township is a township in Middlesex County in the State of New Jersey