



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Parma to create local drug-abuse response teams

Mayor DeGeeter also part of Ohio Mayors Alliance board that met with Gov. Kasich

PARMA – The City of Parma will use an \$87,500 grant to create drug intervention teams to help supplement on-going local efforts to combat the opioid crisis.

The city is one of 40 communities across the state to obtain funding through the Ohio Attorney General’s Office, which made \$3 million available to local communities to battle the epidemic.

Parma will use the money to create Quick Response Teams – made up of a police officer, a paramedic, and a social worker supplied by MetroHealth – that will meet weekly to screen those individuals who overdosed on heroin the previous week and to visit the residences of potential candidates for treatment.

At the home visits, teams will offer resources to individuals and family members and provide a list of addiction services for assessment and treatment.

“On an almost daily basis, our first responders are saving the lives of overdose victims,” Mayor Tim DeGeeter said. “Far too often, our police officers and firefighters are going to the same homes. This program is an attempt to curb repeat overdoses, keep people out of jail, and help individuals with little hope onto the path of recovery.”

Parma is averaging one overdose every 35.6 hours – close to 5 per week. About 85 percent of the overdose victims are city residents. Since 2015, first responders in the Parma Fire Department and Parma Police Department have carried and administered Narcan provided by UH Parma Medical Center.

“This crisis cannot be solved through arrests and law enforcement action alone,” Parma Police Chief Joe Bobak said. “Drug abuse prevention and treatment are incredibly important in making inroads in the fight against an epidemic that is destroying lives and families.”

Fire Chief Mike Lasky said, “It’s difficult to find someone who does not know a family or an individual impacted by drug addiction. These local response teams hopefully will help give some of those people affected by the crisis a measure of comfort in knowing we’re trying to do what we can to help.”

To increase efforts to fight the opioid crisis on a state level, Mayor DeGeeter and other Ohio Mayors Alliance board members recently met with Gov. John Kasich and his Cabinet Opioid Action Team. The meeting was a follow-up to a letter from the bipartisan group of mayors, which recommended ways to strengthen state and local response strategies to Ohio’s ongoing opioid crisis.

“The multi-agency coordination at the state level is critically important and we were pleased to have the opportunity to learn more about the impressive work that is already underway,” said Mayor DeGeeter. “The next step is to find ways to better coordinate state and local efforts, and we are optimistic about working with the Governor and his team to help do that.”