



**Mental Health & Recovery Board**  
of Clark, Greene & Madison Counties

*Help for Today. Hope for Tomorrow.*

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **SHERIFF KELLY ANNOUNCES FOCUS ON TREATMENT FOR INMATES**

Wednesday, June 10, 2015

Springfield, OH – Law enforcement, treatment professionals, peer support specialists, volunteer jail chaplains, government officials and those working in re-entry met today at the Safety Building to hear from local authorities about access to medication assisted treatment (MAT) for inmates in the Clark County Jail.

Sheriff Gene Kelly stressed that addiction is a disease and that we must approach in different ways if we are to address the current opiate epidemic. He described a new protocol for providing oral naltrexone to inmates while in the jail and transportation by the Clark County Sheriff's Office directly to McKinley Hall for continued treatment upon release. Naltrexone reduces cravings and interrupts the sickness associated with withdrawal from opiates by blocking the opiate receptors in the brain.

Clark County Coroner Richard Marsh, MD said that so far in 2015 his office has recorded 38 suspected accidental drug deaths. In 2014 the total for the year was 37. In 2010 his office saw one heroin related death. In 2014 there were 20. Currently the most common drug associated with accidental drug death is fentanyl. It is produced illegally in a powder form and is readily available. "People are buying a white powder and thinking it is heroin. It isn't. It's fentanyl and is 20 times as potent as heroin. Dr. Marsh stressed the need to understand that tolerance for opiates drops quickly. "If a person has a period of clean time and uses the same amount of an opiate as was used before the clean time, that person is at high risk for accidental drug death." Sheriff Kelly has made this information widely available to inmates.

Kent Youngman, CEO of the Mental Health & Recovery Board, encouraged the audience to think of addiction as a public health emergency that responds best when treated with medication. "We treat chronic illness when it presents and throughout the life span. If the first medical intervention is not effective, we try another. With addiction, if the first attempt at treatment isn't effective, we say 'Go away, get sicker, and then come back.' This is not an effective approach to treating a chronic illness." Youngman stated that the entire community participates in a person's recovery.

Wendy Doolittle, CEO of McKinley Hall, described MAT as one of three aspects of treatment, the other two are ongoing counseling and family and peer support. "Naltrexone has been effective as an aid to successful treatment. The cravings are reduced and the person can focus on the learning and life change necessary for long-term recovery from a chronic illness."

It is Sheriff Kelly's hope that everyone who interacts with inmates or those involved with the criminal justice system "sing from the same songbook" and direct people to get help. The next steps are creating a group to coordinate the effort and providing training for jail staff and volunteers. "I'm making a commitment to help people get to treatment. We will drive them from the jail to McKinley Hall to get the care they need."

For more information contact the Clark County Sheriff's Office (937-521-2050) or McKinley Hall (937-322-5300)



