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Governor Wolf Hosts First Opioid Command Center on the Road in Southwest Pennsylvania

Harrisburg, PA – Governor Tom Wolf today hosted the first regional meeting of the Opioid Command Center at the Southwestern PA Human Services Inc. Care Center in Washington, as part of his continuing 90-day heroin and opioid disaster declaration.

“Taking the Opioid Command Center on the road is the logical next step for this ongoing battle against the heroin and opioid crisis in Pennsylvania,” Governor Wolf said. “During the first 90 days and continuing into the second 90, we have been focused on data collection and initiative implementation, so now we are able to go into various regions of the state to share what we’ve collected about that region and listen to the needs and efforts unique to this area.”

The governor was joined by representatives of the Southwestern PA Human Services Inc. Care Center, Command Center members, including Dr. Rachel Levine, Secretary of the Department of Health; Rick Flinn, Director of the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency; Ellen DiDomenico, Deputy Secretary for the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs; Derin Myers, from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency; and Major William Teper of the Pennsylvania State Police, and various stakeholder groups from Washington, Allegheny, Greene and Fayette counties.

The governor highlighted progress on several initiatives introduced over the past 90-plus days:

- Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine signed a naloxone leave-behind standing order. Several local agencies, including the City of Pittsburgh EMS, Fayette County EMS, and the Bucks County Emergency Health Services Department are already participating in the leave behind program.
- Expanded access to the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) to other commonwealth departments for clinical decision-making purposes. Numerous local and state departments have already gained access to the database, and neighboring states are now connected to Pennsylvania’s PDMP.
- Waived fees for birth certificates for individuals with opioid use disorders, allowing them faster access to treatment and benefits. To date, more than 80 birth certificates have been expedited through this process to help get people into treatment faster.

- Added non-fatal overdoses and neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS) as reportable conditions. More than 60 percent of hospitals and birthing centers in the state are now reporting cases of NAS.
- Waived annual licensing requirements for high-performing drug and alcohol treatment facilities and have already seen over 50 percent of eligible facilities apply for and receive two-year licenses, ensuring continued, high-quality treatment for OUD sufferers.

Another major initiative was the creation of the Opioid Data Dashboard to help the public gain access to information about what resources are available locally, and where those resources need to be deployed. The dashboard can be viewed [here](#).

Since the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program went into effect, Washington County has 15 percent less prescriptions for opioids, reducing the number of individuals with opioid-use disorder due to over-prescribed opioids. In 2016, almost 5,000 individuals in Washington County with opioid-use disorder were covered by Medicaid and 3,000 of those individuals were covered by Medicaid due to expansion, meaning that for many people this is the first time they were able to access treatment for addiction.

“I am pleased with our progress under the disaster declaration, but there is much more work to be done,” Governor Wolf said. “I look forward to continuing these regional meetings, so we can continue to learn, gather data, and do all that we can with our various partners across the state to end this scourge.”

More information on the Wolf Administration’s efforts to combat the opioid epidemic and how people suffering from this disease can get help is [here](#).

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