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Gov. Wolf Addresses Opioid Command Center Summit, Highlights Progress Made, Encourages Local Initiatives

Boalsburg, PA – Governor Tom Wolf today kicked off his administration’s first Opioid Command Center Opioid Summit: Think Globally, Act Locally, which brought together 200 individuals helping their communities fight the opioid crisis, including community organizations, non-profits, schools, health care workers, addiction and recovery specialists, and families affected by the opioid crisis.

“Pennsylvania has approached the opioid crisis with an “all-hands-on-deck” response to a threat to our commonwealth,” Gov. Wolf said. “In addition to our many local partners, almost every department in the state has been pursuing some type of program to assist Pennsylvanians affected by the opioid crisis.”

Gov. Wolf highlighted the accomplishments and contributions of numerous state agencies, as well as the overall progress in fighting the crisis. Successful efforts include distributing more than 13,000 free naloxone kits across the commonwealth during three distribution days and 50,000 kits to first responders who have administered nearly 30,000 doses of the life-saving medication to date; expanding access to medication-assisted treatment (MAT) in state correctional facilities; providing MAT grants to health care facilities and removing the need for prior-authorization from most private health insurers in the state to treat with MAT.

“These efforts and more are contributing to winning this battle, raising awareness, reducing the stigma associated with opioid use disorder, and expanding access to treatment, all of which are saving lives and putting people on the road to recovery,” Gov. Wolf said.

The no-cost two-day summit held in State College focuses on the importance of communication, cooperation, and collaboration to provide and implement local level initiatives. Following the governor’s opening remarks, the state’s health secretaries involved in the Opioid Command Center held a panel discussion on the role each agency plays in the crisis. A federal panel featuring the United States Health and Human Services, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the Office of National Drug Control Policy will kick off the second day of the summit.

Some of the breakout sessions include expanding the role of first responders, discussing interventions and recovery programs such as the warm hand-off program, implementation of MAT, and partnerships to help fight the crisis.

Recently the administration provided more than 7,000 kits of naloxone during two distribution days. It was part of Stop Overdoses in PA: Get Help Now Week, an initiative spearheaded by the Opioid Command Center to increase awareness of overdose deaths and help fight the ongoing epidemic.

The Opioid Command Center, established in January 2018 when Gov. Wolf signed the first opioid disaster declaration, meets every week to discuss the opioid crisis. The command center is staffed by personnel from 17 state agencies, spearheaded by the departments of Health and Drug and Alcohol Programs.

Recent data shows that in 2018, more than 4,400 people died from a drug overdose. This represents a nearly 18 percent decrease in drug overdose deaths from 2017.

Work to address the opioid crisis focuses on three areas: prevention, rescue and treatment. Efforts over the past four years, working with state agencies, local, regional and federal officials, have resulted in significant action to address the opioid crisis.

“I feel confident that with the talent and commitment of the people in this room and our partners across the state, we can end the opioid epidemic in Pennsylvania,” Gov. Wolf said. “Thank you all for the hard work you’ve done so far. We will continue to work together in this fight.”

Learn more about how the Wolf Administration is fighting the opioid crisis [here](#).

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