



City of Fall River Massachusetts

PAUL E. COOGAN
Mayor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City of Fall River Awarded \$2 Million Grant for Substance Abuse Prevention

(FALL RIVER, MA- September 10, 2021)- The Office of Mayor Paul Coogan is proud to announce that the City of Fall River has been awarded a 2021 First Responders – Comprehensive Addiction Recovery Act grant from the U.S. Department of Health’s Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. The grant award will provide nearly \$2 million dollars over the next four years to address issues of substance abuse and behavioral health in the Greater Fall River area. The four-year FR-CARA project will provide first responders and key community partners with overdose reversal drugs and trainings, while strengthening a regional network of care for those with substance abuse or behavioral health issues.

While Fall River will be the lead municipality for the project, the communities of Somerset, Swansea, and Westport will also be served. Police and Fire Departments from all four communities will benefit from additional trainings and resources pertaining to substance abuse and behavioral health issues. The FR-CARA grant will also allow for additional Recovery Coaches to become embedded in the Fall River Police Department, supplementing the existing work being done by Niki Fontaine, the Street Outreach Worker already working within the Department.

Partners on the grant application, and the resulting Fall River FR-CARA project, include SSTAR, Boston Medical Center, Compassionate Health Care Group, River to Recovery, Recover FR, Essentia Wellness and LICSW practitioner Mary Chapman.

About the Fall River FR-CARA Project:

The Fall River FR-CARA project goals include preventing and reducing opioid overdoses by purchasing overdose reversal drugs, training first responders and members of key community sectors to carry/administer them, and developing processes, protocols, and mechanisms for outreach and referral to treatment and recovery support services.

Each year, the City of Fall River and its partners (clinicians, social workers, and recovery coaches) will train and provide resources to 500 first responders and others that work with specific populations, such as Portuguese and Hispanic/Latino communities, and high-risk groups, such as homeless individuals, veterans, and former inmates. Trainings will include carrying/administering an overdose reversal drug, cultural competency, and licit and illicit drug safety. Each year, 1,700 doses of an overdose reversal drug will be distributed by first responders and others who will carry and administer the drug. Fall River's FR-CARA Project will address and fill existing service gaps and, perhaps most importantly, will create the first working continuum of care across a multi-agency scope serving the Greater Fall River Area.

“The opioid epidemic has had a huge impact on Fall River, and addressing this issue requires a unified, collaborative approach,” said Mayor Paul Coogan. “This grant allows us to train and equip first responders and organizations working directly with those in need, while also allowing us to strengthen a network that can better care for those at risk of overdose. It tackles the issue from all sides- through behavioral healthcare, through first responders, through community advocates. I am so thankful to the coalition who helped to prepare this application and made this project a reality for Fall River.”