



**Frederick County
Government
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News Release

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Frederick County Executive Gardner Unveils Billboard to Raise Awareness of Heroin & Opioid Epidemic

FREDERICK, MD – County Executive Jan Gardner today unveiled a billboard that illustrates the sobering impact of the heroin and opioid epidemic that has destroyed lives in Frederick County and across the nation. In Maryland, more people are dying from overdoses than are killed in car accidents or by homicide. Drugs are tearing families apart, leaving a wake of destruction, affecting many people beyond those with addictions.

“The numbers we posted on the new billboard today are sobering and we want everyone to take to heart the seriousness of the substance abuse crisis,” said Executive Gardner. “In the first quarter of 2017, someone in Frederick County overdosed from an opioid, on average, every single day. Every week and a half, another person died. The billboard will raise public awareness as part of the county’s fight to end this vicious cycle.”

The billboard is located on Rt. 85 in front of the [Work Release Center of the Frederick County Adult Detention Center](#), 7301 Marcie’s Choice Lane. The statistics posted on the billboard note that there have been 96 non-fatal overdoses and 15 lives lost this year. The numbers will be updated each month so drivers in both directions can see the strong message.

Members of the Frederick County Heroin Consortium, appointed by Executive Gardner to bring government agencies and community advocates together, came up with the idea to install a billboard to let the public know how big the opioid epidemic has become and spark open conversation in the community about heroin and opioids.

In other efforts to address the crisis, the Health Department has trained almost 1,800 people on how to administer Narcan to prevent deaths from overdoses. So far this year, 29 lives have been saved in the county thanks to this training. Working at the Emergency Department at Frederick Memorial Hospital for the past two years, peer recovery coaches are connecting people with treatment and other resources. And, the department’s award-winning campaign called [Take Back My Life](#) offers hope from people who have struggled with addictions.

In addition, the Detention Center is administering Vivitrol to inmates with substance abuse to help them overcome addictions. The school system is identifying ways to raise awareness in age-appropriate assemblies.

Executive Gardner thanked advocacy groups who paid for the sign, including the Maryland Heroin Awareness Advocates, the Crossroads Center of Frederick and the Richard Carbaugh Hope Foundation. She also recognized law enforcement partners, including Sheriff Chuck Jenkins, who suggested the location for the billboard. Many partners such as these are working together to deal with the heroin crisis.

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