

### **Readiness Assessment**

The Lake County Sheriff's Office along with our community leaders have worked diligently to introduce initiatives that will make attempts to reduce the recidivism rates in Lake County. We have made positive strides to bring leaders in our community together and have the conversation and talk about what we can do to address the challenges we face with mental health, substance abuse, homelessness. Our goal is to be innovative with programs that have the potential to not only make our community safer but also to provide resources for people in need in turn reducing our jail population.

Lake County Illinois efforts to reform the criminal justice system dates back decades. The efforts are not limited to just a few organizations. Lake County justice partners collaborate in many different programs that are designed to make the criminal justice system more effective and efficient. The overall goal is to hold people accountable and provide the services they need as opposed to the traditional services that are typically available. The following programs in Lake County are an example of the collaboration, commitment and capacity for programs designed to help reform certain aspects of our criminal justice system. We are committed making change in our communities with initiatives to reduce our jail population.

- Teen Court
- Lake County Opioid Initiative
- Prescription Drug Disposal Box Program
- A way out
- Mental Health Coalition
- Vivitrol in the Jail
- Jail High-Utilizer Program
- Jail Naloxone Program

**Teen Court:** A peer jury program was designed and implemented in the 1995 by NICASA. The program is a collaboration between local law enforcement agencies and a not-for-profit behavioral health service organization. Teen Court is an alternative to the traditional justice system for first time youth offenders ages 10-18. Based on principles of balanced and restorative justice, Teen Court sentences are determined by a volunteer jury of teen peers. Successful completion prevents the youth from having a court record for the offense. The program targets juvenile offenders of misdemeanor crimes such as theft, curfew, trespassing and possession of drugs or alcohol. The juveniles are held accountable for their actions with sentences consisting of community service hours, education about accepting responsibility for their actions and may also include letters of apology, essays, even a tour of the Lake County Jail. The program operates teen courts in six different locations across Lake County in partnership with 8 municipal police departments and the Lake County Sheriff's Office.

**Lake County Opioid Initiative:** Originally the "Lake County Opioid/Heroin Prevention Task Force" held their first meeting in May of 2013. The group is comprised of members from law enforcement, first responders, treatment providers, local hospitals, school districts, faith-based members and government officials. The task force, divided into committees and continues working on strategic plans to combat the drug problem affecting Lake County. The goal is to come together as a community, analyze the challenges, and formulate preventative solutions. The task force aids in the efforts to reduce recidivism through strategic efforts relating to issues confronting users and ex-offenders. The task force provides resources to steer individuals charge with a crime and released from the criminal justice system into a productive, healthy and self-sufficient lives.

**Prescription Drug Disposal Box Program:** Drug collection boxes are in 32 locations around Lake County in participating police departments and Walgreens stores. This program allows citizens to dispose of expired or unused prescriptions drugs. Unused prescription drugs that remain in home medicine cabinets are highly susceptible to abuse. The disposal boxes enable citizens to dispose of the unused

and expired medicine in an environmentally friendly manner. Lake County police departments and the Lake County Sheriff's Office took back a total of 13,274 pounds of prescription medicine in 2017.

Naloxone for first responders (law enforcement): Lake County officials launched a program in November of 2014 to train police officers in 32 communities how to administer Naloxone. Police officer, who generally are first on the scene of an overdose, will have access to three types of delivery systems for naloxone. The systems available are, a nasal mist, a needle and syringe, and an automatic injector called EVZIO. The Lake County Health Department received a donation of 3,000 hand-held injectors, which contain two doses each.

**A Way Out:** In June of 2016, seven Lake County Police Departments joined forces with the Lake County Health Department, several local hospitals, NICASA Behavioral Health Services and the Gateway Foundation to provide "A Way Out" to people suffering from substance abuse disorder. Four more law enforcement agencies were added in 2017. Participants are given a chance to get connected to treatment resources regardless of insurance enrollment or ability to pay. Every effort will be made to match participants with an available treatment provider who accepts the participant's commercial insurance, Medicaid plan, or who needs a financial assistance plan. To participate in the program the person needs to locate a participating police department and ask for help. The police officer will help the participant fill out any necessary paperwork and then they will put the participant in contact with the Lake County Health Department. The health department will deliver a phone screening to determine the appropriate course of treatment services. Based on the evaluation of the screening one of three treatment tracts will be recommended, immediate hospitalization, outpatient treatment or inpatient treatment. The police officer will help with transportation.

**Mental Health Coalition:** A coalition made up of representatives from hospitals, the health department, housing groups, law enforcement, elected officials, and others was announced in August of 2016. The

focus of the group was to share information, identify gaps and recommend a continuum of care for a “vulnerable” population. This population often ends up in emergency rooms, in jail or are homeless and are living on the street. The focus of the group is to share information regarding the effect of mental and behavioral health on Lake County residents and communities. The issue of sharing data given health privacy laws will be among the items to be addressed by the coalition.

**Crisis Intervention Teams:** The Lake County Sheriff’s Office applied for a Bureau of Justice (BJA) grant in 2016 and committed to train 395 of the 1200 law enforcement officers in the county in Crisis Intervention Team training by 2019. The Sheriff’s office has partnered with NICASA Behavioral Health Services and the College of Lake County to develop a CIT model program. This CIT model was presented to the Waukegan police officers in December of 2017 and is currently being evaluated by the Department of Justice (DOJ) to become the model program for the country. If the program becomes the DOJ model, we will modify our grant and proceed with the training of the rest of Lake County.

**Vivitrol in the Jail:** The Lake County Sheriff’s Office started providing vivitrol to the inmates of the Lake County Jail in August of 2016. Inmates that struggle with addiction will have the opportunity to begin a drug-treatment program to help curb cravings prior to release. Vivitrol is a nonaddictive drug that helps reduce cravings for alcohol and opioids. Vivitrol is approved by the U.S. FDA for the treatment of both alcoholism and opioid addiction. It works by blocking opioid receptors in the brain which reduces the pleasurable effects of alcohol and opioid drugs. This vivitrol program is part of the health department’s medication-assisted treatment programs. Participants are required to take advantage of professional addiction treatment along with the vivitrol. Participants who volunteer for the program undergo an assessment and education process to determine if they are appropriate for the program. Those who are eligible receive addiction treatment services through the health department both in the jail and after they are released.

**High Utilizer program in the Jail:** The Lake County Sheriff's Office was awarded an innovation grant from the McArthur Foundation in the Spring of 2017. The Sheriff's Office Community Policing Coordinating Council partnered with NICASA and created a program to provide services for the high utilizers of the Lake County Jail. The program is designed to provide reentry services to high risk individuals that are booked into the jail more than 3 times within a 12-month period. These individuals are evaluated to determine if they are suitable for the program. Things considered are whether the participant will be going to the Illinois Department of Corrections or if they are participating in other diversionary programs like specialty courts (mental health court, drug court, veterans court). Participants are introduced to a case manager prior to being released from the jail and interviews are conducted to evaluate what services are needed that will help keep the participant from coming back to jail. Reentry services are provided and then a "warm handoff" is made to the case manager when they are released from the jail. The case manager provides services like health care, housing linkages, employment training, substance use and recovery programs, parental education, identification. The overall goal is to help participants navigate the system and stop the "high utilization" of the Lake County Jail.

**Naloxone in the Jail:** The Lake County Health Department and Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities (TASC) launched a naloxone education program for the inmates of the Lake County Jail in December of 2017. Health Department representatives visited the jail pods to inform inmates of the opportunity for naloxone training. TASC will provide the naloxone training to inmates that are preparing for release. The goal of the program is to reduce opioid-related deaths. Research shows that inmates drug tolerance can diminish during their time in jail which increases the risk of overdose immediately after they are released from jail. If the inmates complete the training, they are provided with a dose of naloxone and information about addiction treatment services upon release.

These examples are a sample of the programs to reform the criminal justice system in Lake County.

These programs focus on the efforts by the Lake County Sheriff's Office and collaborations with other organizations. There are additional programs by other criminal justice partners. These programs and many others in Lake County are an example of the collaboration, commitment and capacity for programs designed to help reform certain aspects of our criminal justice system, divert people from the jail and to provide the appropriate services.

# Lake County Jail to offer inmates drug to fight addictions



The Lake County Jail entrance in Waukegan. (James Newton / Lake County News-Sun)



By **Jim Newton**  
News-Sun

AUGUST 19, 2016, 4:52 PM

**I**nmates struggling with addiction will have the opportunity to begin a drug-treatment program to help curb cravings prior to release from the Lake County Jail under a new program being offered through the jail and the Lake County Health Department.

The program will give qualifying inmates the opportunity to begin treatment with Vivitrol, a nonaddictive drug that helps reduce cravings for alcohol and opioids, according to Health Department officials.

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Vivitrol is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for the treatment of both alcoholism and opioid addiction. It works by blocking opioid receptors in the brain, reducing the pleasurable effects of alcohol and opioid drugs, officials said.

"It's another tool in our toolbox," said Undersheriff Ray Rose, who has taken a lead role in helping create specialty programs for those with drug and mental health programs in an effort to reduce recidivism and provide prison diversion options.

Rose said the willingness of Lake County officials to work together to create programs such as Drug Court and Mental Health Court, along with training officers in crisis intervention, is increasing the odds of keeping people out of prison and reducing repeat offenders.

The Vivitrol pilot program is part of the Health Department's newly expanded medication-assisted treatment program, which recently received a grant of \$325,000 from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration.

Rose said the results of the program will be carefully monitored to provide data as to whether it will be effective in the long run.

"We began researching Vivitrol as a treatment option for opioid- or alcohol-addicted inmates last summer, using Winnebago County as one of several models," Rose said. "We were impressed with their program's success in combining Vivitrol with intensive addiction treatment."

The new local program will also allow and require participating inmates to take advantage of professional addiction treatment along with the use of Vivitrol.

"Recent changes in Illinois law offer coverage for Vivitrol treatment, and a partnership with the Lake County Health Department to deliver medication-assisted treatment makes sure inmates who want to break the cycle of addiction are provided the resources to do so," Rose said.

By the end of August, inmates who are opioid- or alcohol-addicted will have the new treatment option available to them, officials said.

Those who voluntarily express an interest in the Vivitrol program will undergo an assessment and education process to determine if they are appropriate for the program, according to the Health Department. Those eligible will begin receiving addiction treatment services through the Health Department both in the jail and after they are released.

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Armor Correctional Health Services, the medical provider for the jail, will administer an injection of Vivitrol prior to the participating inmate's release. The Health Department has committed to treating 15 inmates over the next six months.

"Former inmates are at high risk for death from drug overdose, especially in the immediate post-release period," Mark Pfister, the Health Department's interim executive director, said in a news release this week. "Research has identified that there is higher risk for overdose immediately following release which can be attributed to a change in drug tolerance while incarcerated.

"Once released, these individuals may not realize that their tolerance has diminished and can accidentally overdose."

Pfister said he agreed with Rose that "collaborations with community partners are helping us address the growing problem of opioid addiction in Lake County. This partnership with the jail enables us to begin to treat people while they are still in jail and continue to treat them once they are back in the community. We believe this approach will help them stay on course with their recovery and reduce their likeliness of going back to jail."

The population of residents in need of substance-abuse services has substantially increased in Lake County for decades. In 1998, the county had 30 deaths that were attributed to substance abuse. By 2010, that number had more than tripled to 92. Opioid-related deaths in 2008 were 47 and increased in 2015 to 58, according to the Health Department.

The Lake County Health Department/Community Health Center has for decades been the primary provider of substance-abuse services for residents in the county. Its services include screening, brief intervention and referral to treatment (SBIRT); in-patient detox and rehabilitation services; outpatient substance-abuse counseling; medication-assisted treatment; and women's residential services.

The department established an Outpatient Substance Abuse Program in the 1970s to address a growing population of residents with substance-abuse concerns. The program, at 3004 Grand Avenue in Waukegan, provides both drug-free treatment as well as medication-assisted treatment using methadone and Suboxone to treat opioid addiction.

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**MENU**

# **"A Way Out" Lake County (<http://awayoutlc.org>)**

*Fast-track users to substance abuse programs and services!*

## **Program Overview**

Lake County Opioid Initiative's "A Way Out" Program



By taking advantage of “A Way Out”, participants and their loved ones are given the opportunity for help and treatment to end the destructive cycle that substance abuse, dependency or addiction has caused in their lives. Participants are given the chance to avoid the biological, psychological and environmental harms and are set on a direct course to recovery. The only requirement of participants is their self-motivation to seek recovery.

If you are unable to pay for treatment due to lack of insurance or financial resources, you will not be turned away from participation. Program partners are able to accommodate a variety of circumstances and accept different insurance plans.

Anyone can utilize *A Way Out* to get connected to treatment resources regardless of insurance enrollment or ability to pay. Every effort will be made to match participants with an available treatment provider who accepts the participant’s commercial insurance, Medicaid plan, or has financial assistance programs. Many Illinois residents who have no insurance and no income or ability to pay will qualify for assistance through the State of Illinois Division of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (DASA). Participants will be informed of any out of pocket costs by the treatment provider.

The program is set up so that participants will NOT be criminally charged. There is no need to fear arrest or prosecution for seeking participation in this program.

You can find “A Way Out” in just a few easy steps:

1. Locate a participating police department  
(<http://awayoutlc.org/policedepartments/>)
2. Walk in through the main doors of the department nearest you
3. Tell the clerk at the reception window that you want to participate in “A Way Out”. If you are seeking help after open lobby hours, locate the call box on the wall and tell dispatch you want to participate in “A Way Out.” A program representative will be with you to take you through the next steps.
4. **Instructions for Lake County Sheriff's Office, Lake County Sheriff's Office Highway Patrol, and Lake County Sheriff's Office Marine Unit ONLY** (for other agencies across Lake County click here (<http://awayoutlc.org/policedepartments/>)): During regular working hours, which are Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM, participants may come to one of three Sheriff's Department locations including:

**Lake County Sheriff's Office**

25 S. Martin Luther King Jr. Ave.

Waukegan, IL 60085

(847) 549-5200

**Lake County Sheriff's Office Highway Patrol**

1301 N. Milwaukee Ave.

Libertyville, IL 60048

Call (847) 549-5200 to inform of intent to  
participate

**Lake County Sheriff's Office Marine Unit**

703 U.S. Rt. 12

Fox Lake, IL 60020

Call (847) 549-5200 to inform of intent to  
participate

The Sheriff's staff will contact a deputy to work with the participant. If a participant reaches out for assistance and has no transportation, the Lake County Sheriff's Office will dispatch a deputy to pick up the participant. After regular business hours, participants may call (847) 549-5200 and request A Way Out. A deputy will be dispatched to the participant's location if no transportation is available.

## NEXT STEPS

1. A police department representative will meet with you and take you and/or your loved ones through the onboarding process, which includes filling out paperwork is filled out and signing program waivers. If you are in possession of any illegal or legal drugs, the representative will take them from you and destroy them appropriately.
2. The Lake County Health Department will deliver a phone screening to determine the appropriate course of treatment services. Based on the evaluation of the phone screening, one of three treatment tracts will be recommended for you – hospitalization, outpatient or inpatient.
3. If you are going through acute withdrawal, we will transport you to one of four participating Lake County hospitals, who will oversee your medical stabilization in preparation for entering treatment.
4. If outpatient treatment is recommended, an appointment will be made for you at The Lake County Health Department or **NICASA Behavioral Health Services** (<http://nicasa.org/>) that day or on the next business day for a thorough assessment and treatment planning. You will be transported there for a thorough assessment and treatment planning. Treatment may or may not be provided by Lake County Health Department or NICASA Behavioral Health Services. (See NOTE below for more detail.)

5. If inpatient treatment is recommended, you will be transported to Gateway Foundation (<http://recovergateway.org/drug-rehab-centers/northern-illinois/lake-villa/>) in Lake Villa where an assessment will be provided and a treatment plan will be recommended. Treatment may or may not be provided by Gateway Foundation of Lake Villa.
6. If you are unable to pay for treatment due to lack of insurance or financial resources, you will not be turned away from participation. Program partners are able to accommodate a variety of circumstances and accept different insurance plans.

**NOTE:**

- Lake County Health Department (if you are in need of outpatient or intensive outpatient services in **eastern** Lake County)
- **NICASA** (if you are in need of outpatient or intensive outpatient services in **western** Lake County)
- **NICASA** (if you are in need of outpatient or intensive outpatient treatment services delivered in **Spanish**)
- Treatment may or may not be provided by the Lake County Health Department or **NICASA** Behavioral Health Services.



## From the community: Lake County Sheriff, Health Department and TASC to Train At-Risk Inmates on Naloxone



Pictured L2R: Lake County Health Department Program Coordinators Martin Clancy and Nicole Lasak and TASC Representative Amanda Leonard meet with Lake County Jail inmates interested in learning about Naloxone. (Posted by Hannah Goering, Community Contributor)

By **Community Contributor Hannah Goering**

DECEMBER 5, 2017, 1:48 PM

**O**n Tuesday, December 5, 2017, the Lake County Sheriff's Office, Lake County Health Department and Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities (TASC) launched a Naloxone education program for Lake County Jail inmates. The program kicked off with a Lake County Health Department representative visiting the pods and informing inmates of the opportunity for Naloxone training. TASC is set to provide Naloxone training to inmates preparing for release, with a goal of reducing opioid-related deaths.

Sheriff Mark C. Curran, Jr. stated, "We know inmates with Substance Use Disorder have a high rate of relapse. Through this program, we hope to educate inmates on how to prevent overdoses and on

the rehabilitative resources that are available. If they refrain from using during their first couple weeks out of jail, they may be more likely to seek help for their addiction."

"Research determined that former inmates are at high risk for death from drug overdose, especially in the immediate post-release period," said Mark Pfister, the Health Department's Executive Director. "A person's drug tolerance can diminish during their time in jail, so the risk of overdose is higher."

A Lake County Health Department representative will make monthly visits to each pod at the Lake County Jail to educate inmates on the use of Naloxone and encourage them to register for individual training. Inmates who register will be trained to use the overdose antidote by a TASC representative. Following completion of the training, a dose of Naloxone, along with information about addiction treatment services, will be added to the inmate's property bag. These items are made available to the inmate upon release from jail.

The new program is funded by a grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), administered through the Department of Human Services.

"Collaborating with our community partners helps us to address the growing problem of opioid addiction in Lake County," stated Curran. "This initiative enables us to discuss recovery and harm reduction with inmates while they are still in jail."

"These individuals face a difficult transition back into society, often heading back into an environment that encourages their return to substance use," said Pfister. "This is an intervention that we hope will save lives."

Since 2014, the Lake County Health Department has trained law enforcement agencies, schools, community coalitions, municipalities, and medical provider groups on the administration of Naloxone. In addition, the Health Department has distributed over 4,000 doses of Naloxone throughout Lake County. Since being trained in August 2014, members of the Lake County Sheriff's Office have saved 54 lives with Naloxone.

*This item was posted by a community contributor. To read more about community contributors, click here.*

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**This article is related to:** Jails and Prisons, Addiction

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Lake County updated: 11/18/2014 6:44 PM

# Naloxone program launched in Lake County to fight heroin overdoses



**Video: Lake County provides naloxone**



**Mick Zawislak**

The trainers have been trained and soon police officers in 32 Lake County communities will be equipped and ready to administer an antidote for opioid overdoses, including heroin.

"This is something, quite simply, we know will save lives," Lake County State's Attorney Mike Nerheim said Tuesday to officially launch the naloxone program.

Top cops from several jurisdictions and others who have been affected by what Nerheim said is an "epidemic" of overdoses and deaths joined him at the Mundelein Police Department to discuss what was described as one the few programs of its kind in the U.S.

About 1,700 police officers in DuPage County in January were deployed with the antidote drug, and as of mid-October it had saved 25 lives. Lake and DuPage are the only countywide programs in Illinois, Nerheim said.

<http://www.dailyherald.com/article/20141118/news/141118312/>

2/14/2018

"This is just the right thing to do," Mundelein Police Chief Eric Guenther said. He and Round Lake Park Police Chief George Filenko co-chaired the law enforcement subcommittee of the multipronged Lake County Opioid Initiative (<http://opioidinitiative.org/>) that started a year and a half ago. "No matter who this happens to, somebody out there loves that person."

The initiative also includes aggressive prosecution of drug dealers coupled with an emphasis on treatment and education, Nerheim said.

Police officers, who generally are first on the scene of an overdose, will have access to three types of delivery systems for naloxone: nasal mist, a needle and syringe, and an automatic injector called EVZIO. The Lake County Health Department last week received 3,000 hand-held injectors, which contain two doses each. That part of the arsenal represented a \$1.4 million donation from Virginia-based kaleo Inc.

"It will talk to you and tell you how to use it," said Tony Beltran, executive director of the Lake County Health Department. "You actually never see the needle or touch the needle."

Medline Industries Inc. donated retractable syringes to the initiative.

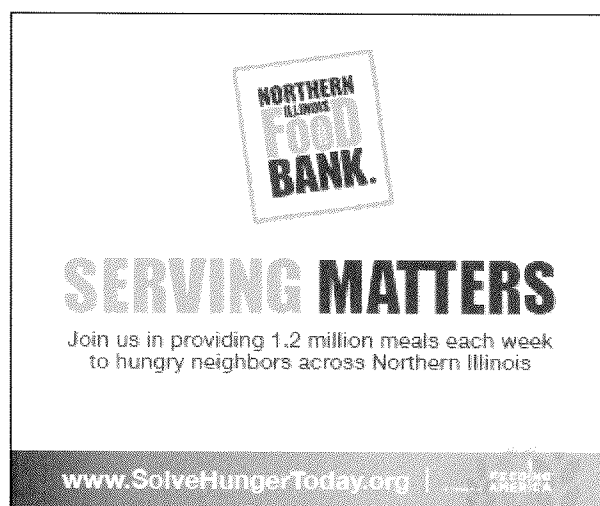
"This whole program will be administered at little if any cost to the taxpayers," Nerheim said.

According to the Lake County coroner's office, 59 cases investigated in 2013 were a direct result of substance abuse. That is a 25 percent decrease from the 81 deaths in 2012, but authorities say the need for services remains acute.

"There's really no community that hasn't suffered and lost lives," Lake County Sheriff Mark Curran said. "Ultimately, it is a toxic drug and it's killing people left and right."

Chelsea A. Laliberte, whose Live4Lali Inc. provides free community naloxone and drug education, said the opioid initiative breaks down social barriers and gives addicts an opportunity for treatment. Laliberte formed the Lake Zurich charitable organization in memory of her brother, Alex.

"Because of the stigma, a lot of people don't want to talk about it," said Terri Bartlett, a McHenry resident who is the operations director for Live4Lali. Bartlett's son, Mike, died of a heroin overdose Sept. 2, 2012. "It's not the dirty guy under the bridge anymore. It's everywhere. It's in every neighborhood."



Lake County updated: 10/27/2016 9:39 PM

# Change sought in addressing mental health issues in Lake County



**Tim Sashko, left, president of the Lake County Board of Health, addresses the Lake County Mental Health Coalition Thursday at its introductory meeting.**

*Mick Zawislak | Staff Photographer*



**Mick Zawislak**

Gathering and sharing information across a range of concerned interests will be key to more efficient and effective services, say members of the new Lake County Mental Health Coalition.

The introductory meeting Thursday of the diverse group marked the start of a countywide effort to identify gaps in existing care and other goals regarding what has been described as a growing mental health crisis.

"What we're trying to effect is communitywide level change," said Amy McEwan, assistant county administrator and coalition member.

The coalition, made up of representatives from hospitals, the health field, housing groups and others, was announced in August by Lake County Board Chairman Aaron Lawlor and former state Sen. Susan Garrett to share information, identify gaps and recommend a continuum of care for a "vulnerable" population.

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"These individuals are too often ending up in emergency rooms, in jail or homeless on our streets, and none of these are good options," Lawlor said at the time.

Thursday's meeting in Waukegan was to get the ball rolling on what is expected to be a complicated and lengthy process.

"We can't just sit and talk about these issues and hope they'll go away," said Tim Sashko, president of the Lake County Board of Health. "There's a lot of horsepower in this room."

The initial focus will be to share information regarding the affect of mental and behavioral health on Lake County residents and communities.

The complex issue of sharing data given health privacy laws will be among the items to be addressed. McEwan said data gathering in a "legal and appropriate way" will help the coalition understand problems and challenges and hone in on treatment objectives. That process is expected to take 18 to 24 months.

"We need to understand what services we already have, where those groups are and opportunities where we can make a difference," McEwan said.

Reducing the stigma of mental health issues and spreading the message that they should get the same attention as physical problems is another goal.

"There's a tendency to try to hide that, and it compounds your whole life," she added.

Lawlor said the group will be "checking all the boxes" to make sure no area is overlooked. For example, Lake County is "woefully behind" in supportive housing, he said.

"It's going to have to go in someone's backyard. It can go in my backyard. I'll take the pledge, but it has to happen quickly," he said.

Lawlor said subcommittees of those with specialized expertise will be needed to ensure no areas are overlooked.

"It's not going to be one of those groups we have a big kickoff and it dissolves," he said.



**Waukegan, IL: This Brilliant Startup Is  
Disrupting A \$200 Billion Industry**

EVERQUOTE

February 14, 2018

For Immediate Release  
Contact: Cynthia Vargas  
(847) 377-3188  
cvargas@lakecountyil.gov

## Eleven Police Departments Donate to the Lake County Opioid Initiative's "A Way Out" Program



Representatives from the 'A Way Out' program's participating police departments pictured above

Lake County, IL- The Lake County Opioid Initiative has received monetary donations totaling \$52,500. The donations were generously provided by eleven of the "A Way Out" participating police departments. The funds will assist in sustaining the "A Way Out" program. In addition, part of the funds will also be allocated to fund a 'coordinator' position in order to manage the program moving forward and as it continues its growth.

As police continue to see a rise in overdose deaths in Lake County, they collaborated to pledge funds from drug asset seizure accounts. The police departments' contributions varied in amounts ranging from \$1,000 to \$7,500. The donations were received from the following police departments:

- Deerfield Police Department
- Fox Lake Police Department
- Grayslake Police Department
- Gurnee Police Department
- Lake County Sheriff's Office



- Lake Forest Police Department
- Libertyville Police Department
- Mundelein Police Department
- Round Lake Beach Police Department
- Round Lake Park Police Department
- Zion Police Department

"Since we began the "A Way Out" program it became very clear that our successes are a product of the cooperation and collaboration that exists among all of the program partners," said Chief Eric Guenther of the Mundelein Police Department.

"A Way Out" is a Lake County, Illinois Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion program, designed to fast-track users to substance abuse programs and services. This program is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at participating police departments across Lake County and ensures no criminal charges will be sought for those that may be in possession of narcotics or paraphernalia, as long as assistance is sought out by the prospective program participant.

The program was developed by the Lake County Opioid Initiative to create additional treatment access points, reduce crime, reduce substance-related harms, re-frame the role law enforcement plays in community safety, and unite the community. For too long, substance use has been stigmatized and dealt with as a criminal issue. Substance use is a public health problem that needs to be addressed as such. Lake County Opioid Initiative is committed to developing innovative ways to create positive change in our community as it regards substance use and mental health. To-date, 296 lives have been saved via the program.

The Lake County Opioid Initiative's mission is to develop, implement, evaluate and sustain a multi-strategy county-wide effort to prevent opioid abuse, addiction, overdose, and death.

For more information on the "A Way Out" program, please visit [www.awayoutlc.org](http://www.awayoutlc.org). For more information on the Lake County Opioid Initiative, please visit [www.opioidinitiative.org](http://www.opioidinitiative.org).