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Harford County to Hold October Heroin Prevention & Awareness Briefings; Important New Information for Parents, Students, Caregivers

BEL AIR, Md., (Oct. 4, 2016) - Children as young as 11 have reported using heroin in Harford County; it has been found in every Harford County ZIP code; it costs less than a movie ticket, and it can be addictive after just one use. To arm parents against this nationwide epidemic, a new series of Heroin Prevention & Awareness Briefings is planned this October in Harford County, through a partnership between the Glassman administration's Office of Drug Control Policy, Harford County Public Schools, the Harford County Council of PTAs, the Sheriff's Office, and the Health Department.

Students, their parents and caregivers, and all concerned citizens are invited to attend a session to learn new information about why opioids are so addictive, the connection between prescription drug misuse and heroin addiction, the increase of synthetic opioids and fentanyl in Harford County, the signs and symptoms to look for, and where you can go for help.

The hour-long sessions are free, and will feature John Wanner, an expert in the field of opiate addiction and the impact of opioids on the brain. Mr. Wanner holds master's degrees in chemical engineering, psychology, and business administration, and has worked in the fields of addiction and treatment for more than 12 years. In addition, presentations will be offered by Harford County Public Schools, the Harford County Narcotics Task Force and the Harford County Office of Drug Control Policy.

All presentations will start at 6:30 p.m. Citizens are welcome to attend a session on any of the following dates at these locations:

- Wednesday, October 5 - Edgewood High School
- Thursday, October 13 - C. Milton Wright High School
- Monday, October 24 - North Harford High School

The sessions will be interactive and individuals in the audience will have the opportunity to anonymously email questions throughout the presentation. Questions can also be emailed in advance to odcp@harfordcountymd.gov .

“I urge everyone to attend these important and potentially life-saving sessions,” said County Executive Barry Glassman. “County leaders are working closely every day to eradicate addiction in Harford County, but no government program is as powerful as parents talking to their children.”

“Every parent should attend one of these presentations,” said Sandra Monaco, president of Harford County Council PTA. “This is not a repeat of last year’s information. Instead, attendees will learn about the newest research available on heroin addiction. We all need to know what we can do to keep our kids safe.”

“No single entity can address the heroin epidemic that we are currently facing in Harford County,” said Barbara P. Canavan, superintendent of Harford County Public Schools. “As we continue to collaborate with the County Executive, the Harford County Council of PTAs, the Sheriff’s Office and the Health Department, we hope that our community will see the importance of community partnerships; these relationships are key to reaching each of our children in Harford County, before heroin does.”

“Last year I was extremely honored to be a part of the dynamic team that brought valuable presentations to the middle schools,” said Harford County Sheriff Jeffrey R. Gahler. “Each night was a packed house, demonstrating the commitment to the well-being of our children in Harford County. But, it was evident that there was still much work to be done. Over the next month, we will be presenting critical information in high schools throughout the county. The time to get involved is now. To end the heroin epidemic that has descended on our county, we all must work together in true partnership. Everyone has a role – legislators, government, schools, law enforcement, and parents.”

To learn more, to register for other community presentations and events, or to request a speaker presentation for your organization, neighborhood or business, please visit www.harfordcountymd.gov/services/drugcontrol or contact the Harford County Office of Drug Control Policy at 410-638-3333.

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