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**Former DEA Official Highlights Pharmaceutical Industry's Role in the Opiate Epidemic
at Harford County's 14th Annual Drug Symposium**

BEL AIR, Md., (June 21, 2018) - Joe Rannazzisi, a former DEA official who has charged the pharmaceutical industry with culpability in the opiate epidemic was the keynote speaker for Harford County's 14th annual Drug Prevention, Intervention and Treatment Symposium held June 21 at Bel Air High School. More than 300 attendees heard Rannazzisi discuss his findings and goals to enforce the Controlled Substances Act.

The Harford County Office of Drug Control Policy holds the yearly symposium to educate professionals and the public on issues surrounding drug and alcohol abuse. In addition to a keynote speaker, the free conference offers continuing education credits for professionals in the fields of addiction, prevention, professional counseling and social work. Attendees benefit from learning about the latest developments, approaches and techniques. The symposium is held in partnership with the Harford County Health Department, Harford County Public Schools, and the Harford County Sheriff's Office.

A vast array of topics were presented at this year's morning and afternoon workshops with titles including: Substance Abuse Prevention and Suicide Prevention; Vicarious Trauma and Workplace Resilience; Overdose Education and Naloxone Distribution; Relapse Prevention; and Spirituality and Recovery from a Neuroscience Perspective. Throughout the day, participants were also able to visit and network with 20 different exhibitors.

New to the symposium this year, was the I'M POWER'D Youth Summit, a series of workshops developed for teens. Topics included bullying, mental health, managing stress, fostering a healthy self-image, and social media safety. Twenty-seven young adults from throughout the County participated in the youth programming.

"I look forward to sharing what I learned today with my friends," Jen, 17, said. "Teens don't consciously understand the negative causes and implications of social media. It was eye-opening and scary to see how much information is shared on the internet and to learn about how that could hurt someone's future."

The final plenary address featured Dion Flynn, a former Harford County Public School student, known for his appearances as Barack Obama on “The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon.” Flynn is in long-term recovery and was cited by Oprah Magazine as “one of our favorite creative thinkers”; he presented his improv recovery workshop at the symposium.


“Our symposium is an important component of Harford County’s awareness strategy,” said Harford County Executive Barry Glassman. “We truly appreciate the tremendous support from our partners, special guests, and everyone who attended.”

For more information about drug abuse prevention and awareness programming in Harford County, contact the Office of Drug Control Policy at 410-638-3333, or www.harfordcountymd.gov/ODCP.



Former DEA official Joe Rannazzisi (left) and Harford County Executive Barry Glassman addressed more than 300 attendees at Harford County’s 14th Annual Drug Prevention, Intervention and Treatment Symposium held June 21, 2018 at Bel Air High School.

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