



To Whom It May Concern:

The Alliance for Positive Health is calling on the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services and the Governor of the State of New York to provide state funding to support the treatment and transition services to individuals with substance use disorders (SUD) who are incarcerated in county jails.

NYS is engaged in a significant effort to address the rising rate of substance use disorders (SUDs), including the epidemic of opioid and heroin addiction and the increasing number of deaths due to overdose. The state has taken aggressive steps to address the heroin/opioid epidemic, including the rapid expansion of community-based treatment and support services to create a continuum of care to support the individual and family in their recovery.

**Unfortunately, there remains a significant gap in the treatment and support continuum care being developed by the state: the local jail.**

The link between offending and SUDs is well established, bringing significant numbers of individuals suffering from addiction into our jails. Alcohol and drugs are implicated in roughly 80% of offenses, including domestic violence, DWIs, property offenses, drug offenses, and public order offenses. According to a report conducted by Policy Research Associates on behalf of the NYS Conference of Local Mental Hygiene Directors, County Sheriffs indicated that 68% of the individuals detained in their jail on drug-related charges had been in their jail before.

Jail incarceration provides a unique opportunity to offer treatment supports during periods when people are clean and sober. A New England Journal of Medicine study found that in the first two weeks after release, former inmates with an opioid use disorder were 12.7 times more likely than other individuals to die of an overdose. A comprehensive re-entry plan is critically important to minimizing the possibility of drug use, overdose and recidivism and for those jails that do have some treatment services, those services are far outpaced by the escalating need for them.

The benefits of providing effective SUD services in the jail setting have proven significant where they occur. A handful of localities in NYS have supported a level of service through local funding and are reaping significant benefits. Albany County's jail-based Sheriff's Heroin Addiction Recovery Program (SHARP) provides SUD treatment during incarceration and support services after release. The program has resulted in a 28% reduction in the recidivism rate. NYS's own analysis of the costs and benefits of jail-based SUD treatment found that communities realize a savings of \$2,846 per person served, and that there are 13 fewer victimizations per 100 people served.

In NYS, counties bear the sole burden for supporting SUD services in jails, and it is an ever-increasing burden with substantial unmet need. 51% of jails have no funding for SUD treatment services despite strong evidence that these services reduce crime, save money, and save lives and 53% of jails do not have the capacity to directly transition addicted inmates to community treatment programs upon re-entry.

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A dedicated State funding stream to counties is desperately needed to provide SUD treatment services in the jails, including screening and assessment at entry, education and counseling services, peer support, medication assisted treatment and discharge planning to continue treatment post-incarceration. **Counties are requesting funding of \$12.8 million annually to the LGUs to address the existing gap in the SUD treatment continuum and support efforts to reduce the human cost of the heroin/opioid epidemic on New Yorkers, and reduce recidivism and victimization.**

The Alliance for Positive Health calls on the Governor and the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services to help combat the heroin and opioid epidemic, save lives and reduce the rate of recidivism, by providing state funding for the treatment and transition of incarcerated individuals with SUD in our county jails.

Thank you for your consideration and support of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Faragon', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

William F. Faragon  
Executive Director

WFF/kac