

# St. Lawrence County calls on state to help fund addiction treatment program for jail inmates

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CANTON -- As the number of addicts being incarcerated continues to rise St. Lawrence County legislators are calling on the state to help fund treatment services.

St. Lawrence County has struggled with heroin, opioid and methamphetamine related crime and addiction over the past several years. At least 14 overdoses deaths were confirmed in 2016 and the total number of deaths is likely even higher.

Legislators are hopeful that improved treatment could help reduce deaths and crimes by helping addicts who are incarcerated overcome their addiction.

The resolution brought forward by Legislator Joseph Timmerman says incarceration provides a unique opportunity to offer treatment supports during periods where people are clean and sober.

Legislators say treatment could help reduce the likely hood of recidivism and reduce the chance of death among addicts.

In Albany County, the correctional facility-based Sheriff's Heroin Addiction Recovery program provides treatment during incarceration and support services after release. According to the resolution the program has resulted in a 28 percent reducing in the recidivism rate.

The resolution also cites a New England Journal of Medicine study that found former inmates with an opioid use disorder were 12.7 times more likely than other individuals to die of an overdose within the first two weeks after release.

Unfortunately, such treatments are costly, especially in a county with weak tax base and high instances of addiction. That's why legislators are asking the state to establish a \$13 million fund to aid counties throughout the state.

"Currently in New York State, counties bear the overwhelming portion of the financial burden for supporting SUDs services in correctional facilities and it is an ever increasing burden with demonstrated unmet need," the resolution says.

According to a New York state study treating addicts in a correctional facility is also more cost effective than treating those who are not incarcerated. The study showed such treatments would save \$676 per participant in costs incurred by victims which include medical expenses, mental health care, damage to personal property and lost earnings due to harm or injury.

"A dedicated state funding stream to counties is desperately needed to provide SUD treatment services in the correctional facility setting, including screening and assessment at entry, education, counseling, peer support, medication and discharge planning to continue treatment post-incarceration.

At a finance committee meeting help recently legislators voted in favor of calling on the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services to fund treatment programs.

<http://northcountrynow.com/news/st-lawrence-county-calls-state-help-fund-addiction-treatment-program-jail-inmates-0231260>