



# PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **OCPO HEROIN TREATMENT PROGRAM TO HELP THOSE FIGHTING ADDICTION GROWS NEW BRANCH IN OCEAN COUNTY**

Prosecutor Joseph D. Coronato today announced the "Blue HART" (Heroin Addiction Recovery Treatment) program continues to grow in Ocean County by adding its' seventh participating police departments. Little Egg Harbor Township Police Chief Richard Buzby has successfully prepared his department to join Brick Township, Lacey Township, Manchester Township, Ocean Gate, Point Pleasant Borough and Stafford Township Police in providing critical addiction recovery help.

The "Blue HART" program, which initially began on January 9, 2017 under the name HARP (Heroin Addiction Response Program), was the first of its kind law enforcement addiction help program in New Jersey. The program allows substance abusers to turn themselves and their product in at any of the seven (7) participating police headquarters in order to go to addiction services providers for treatment evaluation without any threat of charges or jail.

Today, Little Egg Harbor Township PD, which quietly began their program in mid-February to fine-tune their operation, will officially join this innovative initiative by collaborating with Ocean Mental Health in Manahawkin and Bayville. Presently, Lacey, Ocean Gate and Stafford PD is already aligned with Ocean Mental Health, Brick PD is partnered with Preferred Behavioral Health in Lakewood and Manchester PD works with Integrity House in Toms River. The expansion of the program now makes help available at Ocean Gate and Lacey PDs on Monday, Little Egg Harbor, Point Pleasant Borough and Stafford PDs on Tuesday, Manchester PD on Wednesday or Brick PD on Thursday for those seeking immediate critical help in fighting drug addiction.

Blue HART is designed to go beyond OCPO's initial proactive Narcan and Recovery Coach Program measures to offer substantial diversion help in order to reduce the impact of heroin and opiate abuse in our community. The premise of the program is simple – any person who voluntarily enters the three participating agencies and requests help with addiction to heroin or opiates, or any substance, shall be immediately screened for potential participation in the program. Though the program is primarily designed to apply to persons who present themselves at the station, an officer who encounters a person outside the police station believing they would benefit from Blue HART has the discretion, based upon their training and experience, to bring an individual to the police station if the person consents to the voluntary screening process. The officer/shift supervisor, upon completion of the Blue HART screening process shall provide transportation for the participant to the designated provider as soon as reasonably possible.

Prosecutor Coronato stated, "I applaud the participating police department's proactive efforts and eagerness to help those in their communities fight this tragic epidemic. Since January, "Blue HART" has helped over 300 individuals to successfully fight the curse of addiction. I cannot thank enough Behavioral Health, Integrity House and Ocean Mental Health for their generous commitment to the people of Ocean County in making our vision a reality. Our county leads the state in providing lifesaving options to those fighting and seeking addiction help."

See attached link to the Blue HART flyer: <https://tinyurl.com/y7dco9g6>

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