

Hamilton County Sheriff's Office, Response to Opiate Crisis.

Hamilton County has been particularly affected by the ongoing opiate crisis. Sheriff Neil has met this crisis head on by engaging in cutting edge law enforcement programs, collaboration with other entities and agencies on a level never before seen in this county and engaging in prevention and treatment options. This multi-teared approach to the problem is geared at reducing the number opiate related deaths, holding drug dealers responsible for their crimes, providing access to treatment for those addicted, and reducing recidivism in the county jail amongst addicted individuals.

Patrol / Enforcement

In 2015, Sheriff Neil ordered that all Patrol / Enforcement deputies be trained and equipped with nasal Narcan. Deputies frequently arrive at the scene of an overdose prior to EMS personnel. Having the deputies trained and equipped with Narcan gives the overdosing subject a much better chance at survival.

Hamilton County Heroin Coalition / Hamilton County Heroin Task Force:

The Hamilton County Sheriff's Office partnered with the Hamilton County Heroin Coalition. This coalition consists of local, state and federal partners working together with elected officials, members of the medical community, treatment providers, addiction specialists and concerned citizens. One component of the Hamilton County Heroin Coalition is the Hamilton County Heroin Task Force. The Heroin Task Force was created with the cooperation of the Hamilton County Police Chiefs Association. This group is tasked with investigating opiate overdoses, (With a focus on fatal overdoses) and working the case back to identify and prosecute the source of supply of the opiate that caused the overdose.

The Hamilton County Sheriff's Office is a key partner in the Heroin Task Force. Sheriff Neil has provided one Detective Sergeant and two veteran Detectives to this task force. Along with the manpower, the Sheriff's Office manages all of the property and evidence related to these investigations and provides computer and technical support to the task force. Sheriff Neil has deputized every member of this multijurisdictional task force in order to help eliminate jurisdictional boundaries when conducting investigations into overdoses and overdose deaths. This task force has proven effective at holding those accountable who supply deadly opiates in our region. The Hamilton County Heroin Task force is comprised of officers from the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office, The Cincinnati Police Division, The Norwood Police Department, Sharonville Police Department, Ohio State Highway Patrol, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigations, Blue Ash Police Department and The U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency. In 2016, the Hamilton County Heroin Task Force was recognized by the Ohio Attorney General by being awarded the Ohio Distinguished Law Enforcement Group Achievement award.

Hamilton County Sheriff's Office

Innovations and improvements in Corrections:

The opiate crisis has been extremely difficult on our operations in regards to Jail Services. The Hamilton County Justice Center has an average daily population of 1,524 inmates. In 2016, there were a total of 30,977 admissions into the jail. This ranks the Hamilton County Justice Center as one of the top 25 busiest jails in the Nation. A large part of our jail population is due to the opiate crisis. Inmates are often arrested for possession, or dealing drugs or ancillary crimes related to the individuals drug habit. These issues have caused the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office to look for new and innovative ways to try to reduce the inmate population, decrease recidivism, and assist addicted inmates in rehabilitation efforts. Through a series of partnerships and re-allocation of resources, the following efforts have been put into place:

Veteran Unit

The veterans unit was implemented based on recommendations to Sheriff Neil from Sister Kateri Koverman, a Sister of Charity nun. Sister Koverman served in the United States Army during Vietnam and suffered from PTSD. Based on her own experiences and training, she knew that she would be able to assist incarcerated veterans with their problems. A sentiment she often shared with people is, although these inmates committed a crime, they deserve our respect and support because they stepped up and signed their name on the dotted line and served their country. The unit currently houses sixteen inmates, but the overall program serves an average of 50 inmates daily. The veteran inmates routinely receive support and post incarceration placement from various agencies throughout the county. Some of the participants are volunteers from the Veterans Administration, Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, the American Legion, Shelter House and Joseph House. Housing several of the veterans in one unit so they may aide each other with solutions to their issues is key to success.

Detoxification Unit

As a result of the growing heroin addiction epidemic, the amount of offenders being incarcerated who experience withdrawal symptoms is continuously growing. In order to aide these offenders in coping with the physical symptoms of withdrawal; a specific unit was designated where inmates are housed for the first seven to ten days of their incarceration so that the Medical staff can better treat them.

Recovery Unit

The growing amount of people incarcerated who are addicted to opiates is a problem faced by every jail in Ohio. In order to help resolve this problem, many criminal justice professionals and medical professionals realize that some form of treatment must be provided to these incarcerated individuals to have any chance of breaking the cycle of addiction. The Jail Services Division has partnered with several organizations throughout

Hamilton County Sheriff's Office

the county to provide opiate addiction support and education to the inmate population. In order to focus this support on individuals who want it, a unit was designated as the "recovery unit". One of the goals of this unit is post-incarceration placement into more intensive treatment. Although statistical data is still being collected as to the effectiveness of this unit, based on responses from the inmate population it appears to be very favorable.

Alcoholics Anonymous/Narcotics Anonymous Counseling

The amount of offenders being incarcerated that have addiction problems is staggering. In order to combat this problem, the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office partners with Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous to provide ongoing support to the inmate population.

The Hamilton County Sheriff's Office remains committed to working hard through cooperation and partnerships to combat this ongoing opiate crisis. This agency will continue to engage in programs and practices that have proven effective while embracing innovations that show promise.