



City of Brockton

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For Immediate Release:

Boston Medical Center, Brockton, BSU partner to combat opioid crisis

BRIDGEWATER, MA – A \$1.3 million National Institutes of Health grant will allow the City of Brockton to team with its longtime partners Bridgewater State University (BSU) and Boston Medical Center (BMC) in the battle against opioid addiction.

BSU will oversee the \$1.3 million that is part of the HEALing Communities Study, a multi-site, national study that will evaluate the implementation of evidenced-based approaches to treat individuals with opioid use disorder to determine best practices that can be successfully adopted in communities across the country to reduce opioid overdose deaths. The community-engaged study is being led in Massachusetts by Boston Medical Center.

Brockton, which lost 50 residents to opioid overdoses last year, is one of 67 communities taking part in the national study which aims to reduce these deaths by 40 percent over the next several years. The grant will be used to hire a coordinator, fund student internships, and take other steps to develop and implement a range of different programs related to naloxone distribution, medications for opioid use disorder and safer opioid prescribing.

“Brockton is grateful for the opportunity to enhance our understanding of how to prevent opioid-related deaths and ensure that our community members remain safe,” said Mayor Robert F. Sullivan. “The opioid epidemic continues to take lives within our community. We are confident that through this dedicated partnership with BSU and BMC, the City of Brockton will be better equipped to prevent and treat opioid use disorders to save lives.”

“Brockton officials wanted BSU to play a larger role because of our past successes in leadership in the opioid arena,” said Vinny deMacedo, BSU’s director of regional partnerships and a proponent of taking action on the opioid front since his days in the Massachusetts Legislature. “I felt this was one of the most important issues we as a Commonwealth have to address.”

The program will create 20 new internships each semester for BSU students who will directly assist in the project. Interns could come from social work, psychology, public health and other disciplines. Their roles could include research and data analysis as well as directly serving partner organizations.

“City of Champions”

"It's one of the main reasons for Bridgewater to get involved. It gets our students out there in the community and builds a pipeline to go out and do really meaningful work," said Chris Frazer, executive director of BSU's Wellness Center.

"We are extremely grateful to partner with organizations who are committed to helping improve the lives of individuals with opioid use disorder in their communities," said Valerie Puleo, facilitator for the HEALing Communities Study community coalition in Brockton, which is comprised of individuals from a variety of sectors including health care, social services, criminal justice, the faith community and the broader public.

For more information about ongoing work taking place in Brockton as part of the HEALing Communities study, visit <https://healingcommunitiesstudy.org/communities/mabrockton.html>.

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