



OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
RICHMOND COUNTY

MICHAEL E. MCMAHON
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
130 Stuyvesant Place
Staten Island, NY 10301

PRESS RELEASE

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Contact:

Ryan Lavis
718-556-7150

**RCDA, Staten Island Performing Provider System and Northwell Health
Announce Partnership to Continue and Expand Targeted Community Health
Programming for Staten Island**

RCDA, Staten Island PPS and Northwell Health will work on development, implementation, and expansion of community health programming to address substance abuse and gun violence prevention on Staten Island

Staten Island, N.Y. – Richmond County District Attorney Michael E. McMahon today joined Joseph Conte, Executive Director, Staten Island Performing Provider System (SIPPS), Dr. Brahim Ardolic, Executive Director, Staten Island University Hospital (SIUH), and NYPD Assistant Chief Frank Vega, Staten Island Borough Commander, to announce the continued partnership between the Staten Island District Attorney’s Office, Staten Island Performing Provider System, and Northwell Health to deliver community health programming for Staten Island to address substance abuse, mental health issues, and gun violence.

Recognizing the pandemic has exacerbated these issues which continue to claim lives every week, law enforcement and the health community have joined together to ensure Staten Island has the resources and services to help more people struggling with substance abuse and mental health issues while at the same time working together on new ways to prevent gun violence to keep our communities safe. Under the newly signed agreement, SI PPS and Northwell Health will provide support and funding to continue and expand RCDA’s Alternatives to Incarceration programs, including the HOPE programs, Overdose Avoidance and Recovery (OAR) Court, and the High Risk SUD/Alcohol/Suicide (HUGS) program. At the same time, the agreement also allows for the development and implementation of community-based initiatives aimed at preventing gun violence on Staten Island.

“Substance abuse, mental health issues, and gun violence remain among the most serious issues we currently face on Staten Island, with the ongoing pandemic only making these challenges more difficult to combat. This is why the partnership between law enforcement and the health community is crucial to protecting our communities and improving the lives of all who call Staten Island home,” **said District Attorney Michael E. McMahon.** “With the support of the Staten Island Performing Provider System and Northwell Health, my office will continue to provide quality community-based resources to help more people struggling with substance abuse and mental health issues while at the same time working together on new ways to prevent gun violence to keep our communities safe. I am proud to join the SIPPS, Northwell Health, and the NYPD today to ensure Staten Islanders continue to have access to a wide-range of community health programming and we remain committed to providing the resources necessary

“The SI PPS remains a steadfast and enthusiastic supporter of the continued partnership with our outstanding DA and our Borough Commander. The funds provided today will continue the innovative and highly effective programming that law enforcement and the PPS network are implementing to support our community” **said Joseph Conte, PhD Executive Director of the Staten Island PPS.**

“We look forward to many years of continued collaboration as exciting new strategies are deployed to move prevention efforts upstream, expanding health equity for Staten Islanders”, **said Ashley Restaino, Managing Director for Operations and Strategy at the PPS.**

In speaking of District Attorney’s McMahon commitment to addressing substance abuse on Staten Island, **Brahim Ardolic, MD, SIUH’s Executive Director said,** “These issues go hand-in-hand and can’t be done in a silo. They are historic issues that are increasing due to the historic impact of the pandemic. It’s been an amazing partnership with the District Attorney and the SI PPS, to tackle these issues. These new programs are really integral to getting people into the community to treat people where they are and providing access and support to get them where they need to be.”

“The NYPD is proud to partner with members of the health community and the Staten Island District Attorney’s Office to ensure Staten Island has the resources and services to assist those persons with substance abuse and mental health issues. The NYPD remains committed to keeping Staten Island communities safe and working with community partners to expand community health resources,” **said Commanding Officer of Staten Island Frank Vega.**

In 2019, 92 overdose deaths occurred in Staten Island. That is a 17% decline from 2018 when 111 overdose fatalities occurred in the borough. In 2020, we are currently aware of 91 overdose deaths that occurred in 2020 in borough. This is a preliminary count. Because of COVID we are concerned that this number is artificially low, and anecdotally we expect final numbers to be much higher given the challenges of 2020 and the impact on OCME and DOHMH. DOHMH has reported that for first half of 2020 there were more unintentional overdose deaths in NYC than ever before. Bronx had highest rate of overdose, while Staten Island second highest rate. In 2021, there have already been 95 overdoses since January 1, 2021 – 41 deaths and 54 saves that we are aware of, according to the Overdose Response Initiative.

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