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On May 1, 2017, the McHenry County Substance Abuse Coalition (www.McDrugFree.com) in cooperation with the McHenry County Sheriff's Department and local police departments, Centegra Hospital System, McHenry County Mental Health Board, McHenry County State's Attorney's Office, Rosecrance McHenry County, Gateway, and Not One More – McHenry County, began accepting participants into the A Way Out Program - McHenry County. This program was developed in an effort to increase the number of people receiving treatment for a growing concern in every part of the nation: drug addiction. Drug overdose is America's leading cause of accidental death with over 52,000 deaths in 2015 and over 59,000 in 2016. In McHenry County we had 56 individuals die in 2016. It is estimated that for every one death there are an additional 130 people struggling with drug abuse which represents over 7,200 in our own community.

Just six weeks into this new program A Way Out - McHenry County has already served 23 people. Men and women from McHenry County battling opioid and alcohol addiction took the opportunity offered by the A Way Out - McHenry County program to access treatment. Individuals received assistance with placement in detox services, residential services and out-patient services based on the assessed level of need.

A Way Out - McHenry County offers substance abuse treatment 24/7 to anyone in McHenry County that wishes to seek recovery. All a participant needs to do is walk through the main doors of any of the participating police departments (www.co.mchenry.il.us/awayout) and tell the clerk at the reception window that they are here to participate in A Way Out - McHenry County.

The participant will be able to turn over to police any drugs or contraband in their possession without being arrested or charged. An officer then transports the participant to Centegra Hospital – Woodstock for an evaluation. From Centegra, the participant is assessed and connected to the appropriate level of care.

A Way Out - McHenry County is designed as a way to connect an individual to treatment if they are not already being served by another agency in the county. We want to ensure that nearly everyone that wishes to participate has the opportunity to do so. There are, however, a few exceptions. First, anyone under the age of 18 must have a parent or guardian's consent. Second, some police agencies may not accept those who do not live in the County. Third, an active warrant/deportation order may be deemed a disqualifier at the discretion of police and/or the State's Attorney's Office.

In addition to the A Way Out McHenry County program the coalition worked with Centegra Health System and McHenry County Mental Health Board to develop a police naloxone program. Naloxone is the opioid reversal drug that should be given if somebody has overdosed. This program has provided naloxone training and product to over 150 officers in McHenry County. This program has successfully reversed 5 overdoses throughout the participating communities.

The McHenry County Substance Abuse Coalition wishes to thank everyone involved in making these programs possible. For more information on A Way Out – McHenry County or becoming involved with the McHenry County Substance Abuse Coalition please contact Laura Crain 815-334-4048 or LLCrain@co.mchenry.il.us.