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Subject: Spotlight: Lt. Gov. Bethany Hall-Long Tackles Addiction

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Delaware leads the charge against addiction by working together

Lt. Governor Hall-Long explains why she created DE's behavioral health consortium and how it can become a national model

Lt. Governor Bethany Hall-Long (DE)

Delaware, like many states, is facing a very serious addiction epidemic. An epidemic that has become one of the worst public health crises we have ever seen. We've all heard it before, and it is true -- this is an epidemic that knows no bounds. No race, background, or religion is immune. We are all affected. As a public health nurse, I know the key to treating this epidemic is understanding that addiction is a disease. As a former state senator, I had the opportunity to lead several initiatives which have helped reduce overdose rates, and expand resources for those in need. While we have seen some progress, it hasn't been enough.

Earlier this year, in my new role as Lt. Governor, Governor John Carney asked me to lead Delaware's efforts to further combat the issue by forming a statewide behavioral health consortium made up of healthcare providers, community advocates, doctors, healthcare providers, law enforcement, and schools. The goal is to break down the silos, find the gaps, and create a unified, integrated plan and blueprint for action for prevention, interdiction, treatment, and recovery for mental health, substance use, and co-occurring disorders. The idea for the consortium is based upon Delaware's cancer consortium model which has had incredible success in reducing cancer rates and disparities among minorities.

Legislation forming the consortium was signed in August, and our first meeting occurred in October. We know that closing the gaps, and lowering overdose deaths will take some time, but we believe Delaware's consortium can become a national model for other states to follow and use to get ahead of an epidemic

that continues to impact communities across our nation.

Read More About Lt. Governor Bethany Hall-Long

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