



Plymouth County Drug Abuse Task Force

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NEWS RELEASE

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PLYMOUTH COUNTY DRUG ABUSE TASK FORCE KICKS OFF STATEWIDE TRAINING ON RECOGNIZING AND RESPONDING TO ISSUE OF DRUG ENDANGERED CHILDREN

BROCKTON – Children advocacy professionals, Massachusetts State Police, local police departments and District Attorney’s Offices are amongst the more than 80 professionals from around the state participating in training to address the needs of drug endangered children being offered by the Plymouth County Drug Abuse Task Force.

The National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children and the United Way of Greater Plymouth County teamed up with the Plymouth County Drug Abuse Task Force to present DEC Development Academy: Building Community Capacity to Address the Needs of Drug Endangered Children. This free training was offered to key stakeholders in Massachusetts, and is being hosted by Plymouth County DA Cruz’s Office through a grant from the Office for Victims of Crime Enhancing Community Responses to the Opioid Crisis: Serving Our Youngest Crime Victims. Orientation for the training kicked off today. The shared goal of the training is to create at least one multidisciplinary team in each county in Massachusetts.

“Our office has made trauma sensitivity and the education of Adverse Childhood Experiences a priority over the years,” DA Cruz said. “Partnering with the National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children is going to give us the ability to share what we have learned with professionals from around the state, and to build capacity here locally and beyond.”

The National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children defines drug endangered children as children who are at risk of suffering physical, mental or emotional harm as a result of a parent or caregiver’s legal or illegal substance misuse. They may also be children whose caretaker’s legal or illegal substance use interferes with the caretaker’s ability to parent and provide a safe and nurturing environment.

“Over the last 20 years, we have found that a multidisciplinary approach has been shown to be the most effective approach to build collaboration, communication, early recognition and intervention, providing long-term benefits to children and families. To change the trajectory of children’s lives and break generational cycles of substance misuse we have to work together.” Said Eric Nation, National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children’s Director of Training and Development.

The Plymouth County Childhood Trauma Initiative has been operating for the past 15 years, and began with the Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative out of Harvard Law School, training a number of pilot schools in Brockton with the Helping Traumatized Children Learn model. The goal at first was to address the issue of child victims and witnesses to domestic and gun violence. It continues to be updated to address more recent trends including the areas of drug endangered children and human trafficking.

From July through September, participants will be offered 11 hours of virtual training, targeted and intense technical assistance to help local communities in Massachusetts build their local alliance for drug endangered children. Taking part in the training are more than 80 stakeholders from eight counties around Massachusetts. District Attorneys’ Offices across the state helped connect key partners to this training opportunity: the Worcester, Essex, Bristol, Hampden and Northwestern County District Attorney’s Offices invited community partners. A goal of the National DEC Academy is to build multi-disciplinary teams, and to that end, Massachusetts State Police, Brockton Police, Bolton Police, Westminster Police, Winchendon Police, Hanson Police, Plymouth Police, and members of the Plymouth County Sheriff’s Department, are all taking part. Child-serving agencies like the Office of the Child Advocate, Department of Children and Families, Juvenile Probation, Family Resource Centers and Child Advocacy Centers, will also be trained in recognizing drug endangered children. Schools, healthcare organizations, community groups and substance use treatment organizations will also join the virtual trainings to learn and collaborate.

“We want to share our knowledge with other stakeholders from around the state to sustain this work and build off the successes we have had here in Plymouth County,” DA Cruz said. “Every person taking part in this training stands to gain valuable information and improve on the important work that they are already doing.”