February 28, 2019

Alberto Santos, Clerk
Board of Chosen Freeholders
Administration Annex
567 Pavonia Avenue
Jersey City, New Jersey 07306

Re: Hudson County Substance Use Task Force
Executive Order No. TAD-78

Dear Clerk Santos:

Pursuant to the public health crisis as a result of the rise of substance use overdose deaths across the state of New Jersey, please be advised that Hudson County plans to take the following measures:

**PREAMBLE**

WHEREAS, in 2017, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services declared a public health emergency and announced a five point strategy to combat the opioid crisis. Among these strategies, the following goals were proposed:

- Improve access to treatment and recovery services;
- Promote use of overdose-reversing drugs;
- Strengthen the understanding of the epidemic through better public health surveillance;
- Provide support for cutting edge research on paid and addiction; and
- Advance better practices for pain management

WHEREAS, in combatting the opioid crisis government must play a significant role in the opioid fight by taking the lead in addressing the needs of the population ravaged by the crisis; and

An equal opportunity employer
WHEREAS, it is critical that the government of Hudson County Government assist in this regard by accepting the responsibility of assisting in:

- Creating a Hudson County public-private partnership consisting of stakeholders involved in combatting the cause, impact and effect of the opioid crisis;
- Improving the recognition of at risk individuals as it relates to opioid addiction;
- Developing educational programs for individuals to understand both the internal root cause and societal influences which lead to opioid addiction;
- Creating a preventive care network across all domains to assist the addicted and at risk population;
- Identifying resources, services and programs to serve the addiction community; and
- Identifying funding sources for the resources, services and programs.

WHEREAS, national data cites an American dies every nineteen minutes from an opioid/heroin overdose; and

WHEREAS, a large number of individuals with substance use disorders become involved in the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, a low proportion of those involved in the criminal justice system receive the benefit of treatment while part of the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, one cause of this crisis is the early use by children of controlled dangerous substances and other illicit substances, with evidence showing that if a child tries any drug by the age of 13, he or she has a 70% probability of developing an addiction by the age of 20; and

WHEREAS, Statewide Drug Harm Index data from 1/1/2015 to 12/31/16 indicates that Hudson County ranks number ten out of twenty-one possible index ratings in relation to drug submissions, Naloxone administrations, drug related deaths, arrests and shooting incidents; and

WHEREAS, in 2017, admissions to treatment in Hudson County were highest for heroin/other opiates and marijuana followed by alcohol; and

WHEREAS, as a result Federal State, County, and Judicial resources are needlessly devoted to dealing with the effects of addiction; and
WHEREAS, the addiction epidemic has caused a crisis within all families and communities throughout the County and has caused a deterioration in the quality of life throughout Hudson County; and

WHEREAS, national data projects the economic implication from the opioid crisis from 2018 to 2020 will be five hundred billion dollars; and

WHEREAS, through the efforts of the County’s Department of Health and Human Services, Hudson County currently directs funds toward the provision of services in the areas of prevention, education, early intervention, treatment and recovery support services; and

WHEREAS, the effects of funded services are impactful, however, additional resources and partnerships will further elevate these efforts; and

WHEREAS, the County of Hudson recognizes that collaborations with other experts and professionals is imperative as we work to reduce the impact of addiction and reduce the number of those who die from it; and

WHEREAS, a unique opportunity, as well as challenges, now exist for government to help combat the impact of opioid related addictions and to improve public health and public safety; and

WHEREAS, the Hudson County Substance Use Task Force, shall examine ways to establish additional initiatives and pool resources and funding streams to reduce the number of overdose deaths within Hudson County, collect data, define best practices in treating persons with substance use disorders, support families affected by substance use and provide guidance relative to policies and practices undertaken by the County in an effort to ensure those with substance use disorders are receiving the support and services needed to achieve recovery.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Thomas A. DeGise, County Executive of Hudson County, do hereby ORDER and DIRECT:

1. The above recitals are incorporated herein as if fully set forth at length.

2. There is by this ORDER, established the "Hudson County Substance Use Task Force".
3. The Substance Use Task Force shall consist of an undetermined number of individuals and its members shall include County officials and representative from the judiciary system, as well as the addiction treatment community.

4. All appointments shall be made by the County Executive for an undetermined term and those persons appointed by virtue of their appointed, elected, or employment related position shall serve ex officio and their terms shall expire with their elected or appointed positions.

5. All members, except the member recommended by the Chairperson of the Hudson County Board of Chosen Freeholder, as outlined herein, shall serve at the pleasure of the County Executive.

6. The Substance Use Task Force shall meet within sixty (60) days of this Executive Order and at least quarterly thereafter and more frequently if directed by applicable legislation or regulations or as demanded by circumstances.

7. The Substance Use Task Force shall gather as much information and data possible concerning the crisis and impact upon society and shall invite to participate and attend meetings of the Task Force those professional educators, students, hospital officials, law enforcement officials, not-for-profit representatives; community leaders; residents; and persons with addiction issues and experiences as deemed necessary in carrying out the mission of the Task Force.

8. The Substance Use Task Force shall have as its Chair a current or former New Jersey Superior Court Judge who has experience in criminal justice drug addiction adjudications.

9. The Hudson Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Family Services shall render upon request from the Task Force administrative support including, but not limited to the provision of or the securing of an appropriate meeting space and ancillary administrative services, if necessary.
10. Legal advice, if sought, shall be provided by the Office of the County Counsel.

11. The Substance Use Task Force, shall include the following persons:

- Honorable Edward J. DeFazio, J.S.C. (Chairperson)
- Honorable Esther Suarez, Hudson County Prosecutor, or her designee
- Honorable Frank X. Schillari, Hudson County Sheriff, or his designee
- Honorable Anthony Vainieri, Hudson County Freeholder, or his designee
- Mary J. Ciancimino, Deputy Public Defender Hudson County, or her designee
- President of Hudson County Chiefs of Police, or designee
- Hudson County Superior Court Criminal Division Manager, or designee
- Darice Toon, Director Hudson County Department Health & Human Services
- Hudson County Mental Health & Addiction Services Administrator
- Director of Hudson County Community Reintegration Program
- Director of Social Rehabilitation, Hudson County Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation Services
- Area Director of New Jersey Division of Child Protection and Permanency
- Nicholas Beam, Program Supervisor Opioid Overdose Recovery Program at the Jersey City Medical Center, RWJ Barnabas Health

12. The Substance Use Task Force shall, at its initial meeting, arrive at a mission statement and objectives.

13. The Substance Use Task Force shall meet at least quarterly or more frequently if deemed necessary.

14. The Substance Use Task Force shall present a report yearly to the County Executive or more often if called upon or if deemed appropriate by the Task Force.

15. In furtherance of this ORDER, the Task Force may call upon any department, officer, or division of County government to provide data or statistical information and such information which may be deemed necessary to carry-out its purposes.
16. This ORDER shall take effect immediately and carries no expiration date.

Respectfully submitted,

THOMAS A. DE GISe
Hudson County Executive

TAD:mm:
cc: Alberto Santos, Clerk Hudson County Board of Chosen Freeholders
cc: Anthony P. Vainieri, Jr., Chairperson, Hudson County Board of Chosen Freeholders
cc: Abraham Antun, Hudson County Administrator
cc: David Drumeler, Deputy Hudson County Administrator
cc: Oscar Aviles, Assistant Hudson County Administrator
cc: Darice Toon, Director Hudson County Department of Health & Human Services
cc: Ronald Edwards, Director Hudson County Department of Social Services
cc: Robert Martinovich, Director Hudson County Department of Social Services
cc: Cheryl Fuller, Director Hudson County Department of Finance & Administration
cc: Donato Battista, Hudson County Counsel
cc: Frank Mazza, Deputy Director Hudson County Department of Social Services