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OPERATIONAL BULLETIN

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2023-07-31-01	Maine EMS SUD Care Ambassador Program		July 31, 2023
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Approved By:	J. Sam Hurley, MPH, EMPS, NRP (Maine EMS Director)		

Maine EMS’ Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Program team is initiating the SUD Care Ambassador Program to support EMS agencies and clinicians in the ongoing response to the SUD crisis in the State of Maine. We understand that responses to overdoses and other SUD-related complaints continue to weigh heavily on the EMS system in the form of resources, compassion, and responder fatigue, so we must help to provide resources for EMS clinicians to best respond to persons experiencing crises.

To date, in 2023, EMS crews across the state have been dispatched to over 6,400 activations of the 9-1-1 system for symptoms related to an overdose. The Ambassador Program is intended to work collaboratively with EMS clinicians and service leaders to share information about SUD and opportunities to assist these patients, family members, and friends with accessing local, timely care for their medical needs. A key objective of this program is to help mitigate stigma among EMS clinicians in response to persons experiencing SUD through education and training. They will also be discussing the expanding programmatic offerings of the Maine EMS SUD Program, including but not limited to the Leave-Behind Naloxone Program, OPTIONS Referral Program, and Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) Initiation Program (coming early 2024).

We appreciate your willingness to work collaboratively with these local SUD Care Ambassadors by inviting them into your departments to speak with your practicing clinicians. They all come to this program with a background in EMS and knowledge about reducing the stigma associated with persons experiencing SUD and mitigating compassion fatigue among healthcare professionals. Their role is to educate and provide more information for EMS clinicians to facilitate improving the quality of care we render to our patients every day.

The Ambassadors (Andrew Fournier, Laura Hohenstein, Sandy Sikes, and Sandy Staples) will reach out to agencies over the next five weeks, and we anticipate extending the program based on its performance.

If you have any questions regarding this programming or other SUD-related inquiries, please don’t hesitate to contact Maine EMS at EMS.SUD@maine.gov or Maine.EMS@maine.gov.

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