

	MEDFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT	POLICY NO. 2.17
SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER INTERVENTION		
MASSACHUSETTS POLICE ACCREDITATION STANDARDS REFERENCED: NONE		DATE OF ISSUE: 06/11/2023 EFFECTIVE DATE: 06/11/2023 REVISION DATE: 11/07/2025
ISSUING AUTHORITY: Michelle Guerette Chief of Police		

BACKGROUND:

Drug addiction not only ruins the lives of addicted people but can affect the lives of others in the community. People who are addicted to drugs often become involved in criminal activity to support their habits. Some addicted people sell drugs or commit crimes such as robbery and theft to support their addiction, which exacerbates the cycle of criminality caused by drug addiction.

The traditional role of the police has been to identify and arrest people who use drugs and the dealers who sell to them. Aggressive enforcement by police departments and federal agencies is an important component in controlling the spread of drug abuse but it should not be law enforcement's only function. The police are in a unique position to identify members of the community who are addicted to substances and who need treatment. Police often respond to drug overdoses, incidents of domestic violence, vehicle crashes, and reports of suspicious neighborhood activity that involve persons with Substance Use Disorder. By identifying addicted people and partnering with substance abuse professionals, the police have the opportunity to help addicts receive the treatment they need. Reducing the number of people with Substance Use Disorder in the community is not only morally sound; it will reduce the cycle of criminality caused by addiction.

POLICY:

It is the policy of the Medfield Police Department to provide information to persons with Substance Use Disorder, and to assist them in obtaining treatment for their addiction.

PROCEDURES:

Norfolk County police departments, in collaboration with the Office of the Norfolk County District Attorney, have established the Norfolk County Outreach (NCO) program to work collaboratively to identify drug users at risk or those that have overdosed; and to work proactively to assist those people with their recovery.

The Medfield Police Department is an NCO participating agency. NCO features a database of people identified by police departments as suffering from Substance Use Disorder (SUD). Persons who have accidentally overdosed, and people who are otherwise known to suffer from SUD, are entered into the NCO database by participating police departments daily.

If an overdose, or incident revealing addiction on the part of a person involved, occurs within a Norfolk County community, the system will automatically notify the police department where the person lives. The NCO program is predicated on the tenet that police departments will contact residents who have SUD and guide them towards appropriate treatment.

The database is not an investigative tool. If the person with SUD, their family or friends want to discuss drug activity or other related information, they should be referred to another officer. This will ensure that the integrity of the NCO program is maintained.

The NCO Database

Only authorized employees may access the NCO database.

NCO database designees should only share overdose-related information with NCO law enforcement officers for public health purposes or to conduct NCO Outreach for the purpose of treatment and recovery. It is not intended for an investigative purpose.

Should the Department receive a request for information from the NCO database under the Massachusetts Public Records statutes, or the federal Freedom of Information Act, the NCO Administrators at Kelley Research Associates shall be notified.

Database information system hardware, software, and media shall be physically protected using appropriate access control measures.

Access to the NCO database is monitored by the NCO administrators at Kelley Research Associates for the purpose of detecting and responding to security incidents.

NCO Database Designees

The Chief of Police will designate an officer(s) as an NCO database designee(s). The responsibilities of the database designee shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Attend and successfully complete required training on the NCO database;

2. Coordinate entering all opioid overdoses that occur within the Town of Medfield. The data should be entered as soon as practicable;
3. Check the database for Medfield residents where follow-up is warranted;
4. Check people for warrants prior to setting up any treatment;
5. Notify the appropriate NCO outreach team through the NCO Network to initiate follow up; and
6. Coordinate with outreach officers to ensure that outreach visit outcomes are recorded in the database.

NCO Outreach Officers

The Chief of Police will designate an officer(s) to serve as an outreach officer. The responsibilities of the outreach officer shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Participate in NCO trainings;
2. Conduct an outreach visit as soon as possible after an overdose has been reported, or a person in need of treatment identified;
3. Distribute educational and prevention material to people with SUD following overdoses or as otherwise needed;
4. When necessary, provide transportation for addicted persons to treatment facilities;
5. Coordinate outreach efforts with recovery coaches, clinicians or social workers designated by the Department; and
6. Following any outreach, or upon being advised by a medical facility that follow-up outreach is not warranted, coordinate with the database designee to update the database.

Training

Outreach officers will receive training that will include procedures for conducting outreach visits with civilian recovery coaches, clinicians, and/or social workers, overdose recognition, naloxone administration and deployment, and interview techniques. They will also learn about the treatment and recovery services in the region, including the services of drop-in centers, detoxification facilities, in-patient and out-patient programs, etc.

Court Commitment

In some cases addicted persons who are in need of treatment resist treatment. Massachusetts General Law Chapter 123, § 35 provides that such a person may be committed by the District Court, if the court finds that the person has lost the power of self-control over his use of alcohol or a controlled substance, and that such use substantially injures his health or substantially interferes with his social or economic functioning. A

petition for a section 35 commitment may be filed by a physician, spouse, blood relative, guardian, or police officer. In cases where a relative or family member is not available, officers of the Medfield Police Department may sign the petition.

Addicted persons committed pursuant to a section 35 procedure should be assisted in the same manner as people who voluntarily accept treatment. As such, the outreach officer or recovery coach should ensure that the person has a plan for follow-up care upon his release.

Arrests of Addicted Persons

When an officer knows an arrestee is a substance abuser, or whose criminal record reflects drug offenses, the officer should seek to engage the arrestee in a conversation about the current status of his drug use. An arrestee who admits to drug use or drug addiction should be informed of the Department's program to assist addicted persons.

Prior to being granted bail any person arrested for a drug offense, or whose record indicates arrests for drug possession, or who admits to drug use or addiction, shall be provided with information about the NCO program. Persons under arrest shall be bailed before being remanded to the custody of a detox facility.

General Requests for Assistance

Patrol officers may have occasion to identify and meet with people who desire to enter treatment for their addiction. Officers are encouraged to seize the moment and assist them with obtaining treatment as long as the shift staffing allows. The outreach officer is available to assist off-hours when necessary. Every effort shall be made to find immediate treatment for a person willing to seek it to reduce the chance that he or she may change their mind.

Officers who successfully find a bed for a person seeking drug treatment should document this intervention in a police report, and this report shall be forward to the outreach officer for follow up.

Any dispatcher who receives a call from a person seeking assistance with his addiction shall notify the shift commander.

Police Reports

A police report shall be filed by any officer who conducts a drug intervention, petitions a court for a Section 35 commitment, or serves a Section 35 warrant of apprehension.