

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 163

WHEREAS, our country and the State of New Jersey suffer under a substance abuse and addiction epidemic; and

WHEREAS, the harmful impact of substance abuse and addiction to alcohol, illegal drugs, and prescription medication has devastated individuals, families, and communities; and

WHEREAS, individuals of all ages, backgrounds, and socio-economic status can fall prey to addiction, and those suffering with addiction are often ashamed of their disease, may be isolated from their communities due to real or perceived stigma, may suffer from co-occurring mental health and physical health diagnoses, and may be unsure where they can access treatment; and

WHEREAS, drug overdose death rates have increased significantly over the past several years, and we collectively mourn the loss of sons, daughters, parents, friends, colleagues, and classmates that have left us far too soon, and we must seek to understand the myriad factors that contribute to alcohol and drug-related deaths; and

WHEREAS, the effort to reduce substance abuse, prevent and treat addiction, and quell the rising epidemic across our State requires coordination across the healthcare system, the education system, the legal system, and the social safety net, with participation from parents, coaches, physicians, pharmacists, teachers, religious leaders, and others who can help prevent substance abuse and urge those who succumb to addiction to seek treatment; and

WHEREAS, a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach to destigmatizing addiction, enhancing prevention efforts, and strengthening treatment services is necessary to address the addiction crisis in our State; and

WHEREAS, as I have stated previously, every human life is precious, and no life is disposable; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, CHRIS CHRISTIE, Governor of the State of New Jersey, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and by the Statutes of this State, do hereby ORDER and DIRECT:

1. There is hereby created a "Facing Addiction Task Force" (hereinafter "Task Force").

2. The membership of the Task Force shall be comprised of the following: (i) the Commissioners of the Department of Human Services, the Department of Health, the Department of Children and Families, and the Department of Corrections, the Attorney General, and the State Parole Board Chairman, each of whom shall serve ex officio and may appoint a designee; and (ii) six (6) public members appointed by the Governor. All members shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor and without compensation.

3. The Governor will designate one individual to serve as Chairperson of the Task Force. The Task Force shall meet on an as-needed basis as determined by the Chairperson.

4. The Task Force is charged with performing a variety of duties including, but not limited to:

a. Develop a thorough understanding of the impact of stigma on individuals struggling with addiction. The Task Force shall review current efforts addressing addiction-related stigma throughout the State and country, and shall develop recommendations for the Governor on additional strategies to reduce the stigma associated with substance abuse and addiction.

b. Develop a thorough understanding of the role prevention plays in reducing substance abuse, addiction, and overdose deaths. The Task Force shall review current

preventative efforts underway throughout the State and country and shall develop recommendations for the Governor on enhancing prevention strategies and efforts in New Jersey.

c. Develop a thorough understanding of the role of treatment in helping individuals suffering from addiction conquer their disease and lead fulfilling and meaningful lives. The Task Force shall review the continuum of treatment options in New Jersey including inpatient treatment, outpatient services, and support groups, and develop recommendations for the Governor on strengthening the treatment system.

d. Advise the Governor from time to time and as necessary on matters related to stigma, addiction, and substance abuse.

5. The New Jersey Department of Human Services shall provide staff support to the Task Force. The Task Force shall be authorized to call upon any department, office, division, or agency of this State to supply it with any information, personnel, or other assistance available as the Task Force deems necessary to discharge its duties under this Order. Each department, office, division, or agency of this State is hereby required, to the extent not inconsistent with law, to cooperate fully with the Task Force within the limits of its statutory authority and to furnish the Task Force with such assistance on a timely basis as is necessary to accomplish the purposes of this Order. The Task Force may consult with experts or other knowledgeable individuals in the public or private sector on any aspect of its mission.

6. This Order shall take effect immediately.

GIVEN, under my hand and seal this
9th day of October,
Two Thousand and Fourteen,
and of the Independence of
the United States, the Two
Hundred and Thirty-Ninth.

[Seal]

/s/ Chris Christie

Governor

Attest:

/s/ Christopher S. Porrino

Chief Counsel to the Governor