



MICHAEL G. BELLOTTI

NORFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NORFOLK SHERIFF AWARDED GRANT TO FIGHT OPIOID CRISIS

DEDHAM, MA, Feb. 9, 2016 – The Norfolk Sheriff's Office (NSO) was awarded a federal grant from the Governor's Office and the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security. The NSO will utilize the funds by collaborating with a regional drug treatment agency to offer additional support and treatment to offenders upon return to their community.

Sheriff Bellotti said "We are grateful to receive this \$112,882 grant and will use it to help break the stranglehold this epidemic has on our communities." In accepting the grant money from Gov. Charlie Baker, Sheriff Bellotti said, "Among the most difficult challenges facing drug offenders re-entering the community is the lack of transitional support." Many former offenders are unable to resist the temptation to use drugs, particularly during the first weeks and months following their release. As they return to their neighborhoods, pressure from friends and drug dealers often overwhelms former offenders struggling to stay sober, without outside support. Sheriff Bellotti stated "this grant money is a first step in bridging the gap in that transition." The grant allows NSO to continue the valuable work which begins at the corrections facility prior to an offender's release. Currently offenders have the option to enroll in a pre-release recovery program which includes an injection of Vivitrol, a drug which neutralizes the effects of opiates for 30 days. After this initial treatment offenders must pursue follow up injections with their own doctor every 30 days. The grant will enable the Norfolk Sheriff's Office, in collaboration with a community drug treatment agency, to provide ongoing drug therapy and support to post incarceration offenders who traditionally have been left to pursue the additional treatments on their own. Sheriff Bellotti noted this new program "is a continuation of our ongoing inmate re-entry programming, which I have emphasized throughout my time as sheriff."

Gov. Baker, Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito and Public Safety Secretary Daniel Bennett offered their congratulations to Sheriff Michael G. Bellotti and the other grant recipients, saying, "It's incumbent upon us to provide them with every available resource to saves lives."

Acknowledging that Massachusetts has a very serious opioid drug problem, the federal government awarded a total of \$2.5 million in grant money, which was apportioned and distributed by the governor's office to 19 criminal justice agencies in Massachusetts.