

News Release



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Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage to Host Opioid Crisis Summit

The Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage will host a community summit on Tuesday, May 15 to discuss the challenges of the opioid epidemic and identify solutions.

The half-day Atlantic County Opioid Crisis Summit, to be held at Atlantic Cape Community College in Mays Landing, will include representatives from the judiciary, education, health care and law enforcement as well as elected and appointed state officials.

The summit is open to all community partners and agencies committed to addressing addiction and seeking solutions toward prevention and recovery.

“We want to take a leadership role in responding to the opioid crisis, which has hit our area particularly hard,” said Assignment Judge Julio L. Mendez. “The summit will bring the various stakeholders and providers together to learn how to respond to the crisis and save lives.”

Dr. Erin Zerbo, assistant psychiatry professor at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School, will provide an overview of the opioid epidemic.

Superior Court Judge Mark Sandson, who heads the vicinage’s Recovery Court Program, will moderate a question-and-answer session.

Dr. Brendan Kelly of AtlantiCare Regional Medical Center in Atlantic City will provide his front line perspective as an emergency room physician dealing with overdose victims.

Vanessa Vitolo, community outreach coordinator for Victory Bay Recovery Center in Laurel Springs, will introduce two graduates of the Judiciary’s Recovery Court Program who will share their personal journeys to sobriety.

Joanne Arnold-Velcheck, director of addiction services for AtlantiCare Behavioral Health, will discuss some of the innovative recovery programs. Local government officials and law enforcement will also discuss their response to the opioid crisis.

Registration begins at 8 a.m., followed by 9 a.m. opening remarks by Assignment Judge Mendez. A recovery court graduation will take place after the summit.

The summit is free but registration is encouraged.

To RSVP for the summit, contact Ellen Procida at Ellen.procida@njcourts.gov. To RSVP for the graduation, contact Vicky Golas at Evridiki.golas@njcourts.gov.

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