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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 1, 2016

Additional Help Coming to Illinois in the Battle Against the Heroin and Opioid Crisis

Illinois is one of 44 states to share in \$53 million in grants to reduce opioid overdoses and deaths and improve treatment for residents

The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) has received two federal grants funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to combat the heroin and other opioid crisis facing the state of Illinois.

“Heroin and other opioid drug use is at crisis levels in Illinois. Substance use is ripping apart families and severely impacting our communities,” said IDHS Secretary James Dimas. “The \$8 million in grants will enhance our efforts for individuals dependent on heroin and other opioids. We continue to work diligently to secure additional federal funding that will help support community-based prevention and treatment efforts. IDHS is committed to working with schools, community-based organizations and the recovery community, to reduce the stigma associated with substance use disorders and ensure access to treatment.”

The Medication-Assisted Treatment Prescription Opioid Addiction grant was awarded by the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment to the IDHS Division of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse. This three year, \$3 million grant will support an expansion of outpatient methadone treatment services and will reduce the waiting lists for heroin and other opioid dependent individuals seeking these services in Illinois. This grant will also support medication assisted treatment for offenders released from Sheridan Correctional Center who are at high risk for returning to heroin use (and high risk for overdose) upon release.

IDHS' Division of Family and Community Services received the Prescription Drug Opioid Overdose Prevention Grant from the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. This five year, \$5 million grant is expected to reduce the number of overdose deaths in the following six high need counties: Cook, Lake, DuPage, Will, St. Clair, and Madison. A key component to this program will be the purchase and distribution of Naloxone kits to first responders. Naloxone is the opioid overdose reversal drug that is critical to saving lives so people can get the treatment they need.

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“Illinois, like the rest of the country, is in the midst of a drug overdose epidemic and we must act now,” said Illinois Department of Public Health Director Nirav D. Shah, M.D., J.D. “According to the CDC, prescribing and sales of opioids have quadrupled since 1999 and more than three out of five drug overdose deaths involve an opioid. This epidemic is devastating families and communities. To stop this trend of opioid overdose, we must provide support and treatment to those suffering from opioid use disorders. And to save lives, we must provide first responders with the resources needed for an individual who has overdosed. It will take all of us, substance abuse and mental health providers, law enforcement, public health, first responders, communities, and others, to put an end to this epidemic.”

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