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Gov. Wolf Calls for End of Stigmatizing Opioid Use Disorder

Harrisburg, PA – Today, Governor Tom Wolf joined Independence Blue Cross Senior Vice President of Public Affairs Stephen Fera, and members of the Independence Blue Cross Foundation to call for an end to the stigmas associated with opioid use disorder. The Wolf Administration is holding its second naloxone giveaway day today at [75 locations](#) across the state.

“Opioid use disorder has devastated too many families in Pennsylvania,” Gov. Wolf said. “This infamous disease has bankrupted households, caused hard workers to lose their jobs, broken up families, killed people we love. Every Pennsylvanian knows someone who is affected by opioid use disorder and we have reached a point where there can no longer be any shame in admitting opioids have affected you.”

The press conference showcased the Independence Blue Cross Foundation’s “Someone You Know” public health awareness campaign to reduce the stigma of opioid addiction. The Capitol Rotunda housed a mobile exhibit with digital stories of the 20 campaign ambassadors who share their personal experiences with this devastating disease.

Someone You Know is part of the Foundation’s Supporting Treatment and Overdose Prevention (STOP) initiative. Through STOP, the Foundation has awarded more than \$2 million dollars to regional partners in Southeastern Pennsylvania to fight the opioid epidemic.

“Governor Wolf and the legislature have been great partners in the fight against the opioid crisis and we have seen progress in Pennsylvania,” said Daniel J. Hilferty, CEO, Independence Blue Cross. “It is critical to raise awareness and understanding about the stigma of addiction, which is why we launched the Someone You Know campaign. When people tell their own stories of addiction, loss, and recovery, they can give others courage and hope.”

The Opioid Command Center, established in January 2018 when Gov. Wolf signed the first opioid disaster declaration, meets every week to discuss the opioid crisis in Pennsylvania. The command center is staffed by personnel from 17 state agencies, spearheaded by the departments of Health and Drug and Alcohol Programs. Work to address the opioid crisis focuses on three areas: prevention, rescue and treatment. Efforts over the past four years, working with state agencies, local, regional and federal officials, have resulted in significant action to address the opioid crisis.

“We need to continue to work together to break down the stigma of opioid use disorder and find ways to openly discuss opioids with our loved ones, so we can assist them with getting the help they need,” Gov. Wolf said.

Learn more about how the Wolf Administration is fighting the opioid crisis [here](#).

Photos and video from this event will be available at www.pacast.com.

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