



Jeffrey R. Gahler
Sheriff

Harford County Sheriff's Office

Office of Media and Public Relations

www.harfordsheriff.org

45 S. Main Street * Bel Air MD 21014 * PO Box 150 * media@harfordsheriff.org * 410-836-5403

NEWS RELEASE

Sheriff Gahler Graduates First Group of Inmates through Substance & Behavioral Health Unit at Detention Center

For Immediate Release

Contact: Cristie Kahler, HCSO Media & Public Relations, 410-836-5403

[March 8, 2017, Bel Air, MD] On Monday, Sheriff Jeffrey Gahler recognized the first six inmates to successfully complete a new 10-week Substance & Behavioral Health Unit at the Harford County Detention Center.

Recognizing the volume of people being processed into the detention center who struggle with substance abuse and the heroin epidemic currently paralyzing our communities, Sheriff Gahler conducted extensive research and toured several successful detention center based recovery programs to establish the first unit of its kind to address addiction at the HCDC. Prior to the existence of the new unit, the Detention Center had multiple programs to assist with re-entry, including AA and NA meetings, but no formal group where inmates struggling to maintain sobriety could be housed together in an environment conducive to recovery. The objective of the program is to reduce the rate of recidivism in the inmate population, reduce the amount of drug related crime in our communities, and reduce the number of drug overdoses and drug related deaths in Harford County's neighborhoods. Sheriff Gahler remarked, "we need to do all we can to ensure people struggling with addiction are given the tools they need to be successful in recovery. For some, incarceration is forced sobriety, giving the addict a window into sober living. During this critical time, we will provide support and services to help them maintain sobriety when they re-enter the community." Sheriff Gahler continued, "I am extremely proud of the individuals who have chosen to be a part of this new program and of my deputies who helped make the vision of this unit a reality. Together we will save lives."

The program is managed by a licensed clinician from Correct Care Solutions (CCS), an agency specializing in providing medical and behavioral health care to individuals in detention and correctional facilities. Participating inmates have been evaluated by Classification and Mental Health staff during intake and demonstrate motivation to enter recovery. They understand

that participation in the program will not be part of a sentence, nor will it shorten the length of their stay. Each inmate must be sentenced to the facility and be eligible for housing in a minimum to medium security setting.

This 10-week program includes daily group meetings based on the 12-steps used in many recovery programs. They are seen by the coordinator weekly or as needed for supportive care. Community resources such as Mens33 and SMART Recovery are integrated into the weekly schedule. The Turning Point Project brings members of AA to the unit every night to introduce the program participants to a daily 12-step meeting.

There are expectations with which inmates must comply in order to remain in the unit. These include medication compliance, demonstrating respectful behavior toward staff, appropriate participation in group and readiness to present assignments when they are due. They must attend and participate appropriately when visiting speakers come to the unit.

At the graduation ceremony, each inmate was presented a certificate of completion from Sheriff Gahler. Warden Michael Capasso spoke to the group saying, “though it is a shame a substance abuse unit is necessary, we are all fortunate to have such a resource made available to you, God Bless you for taking advantage of this opportunity to help yourself fight the demon you are battling.”

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Harford County Sheriff's Office Mission

With courage, honor and integrity we protect the rights and dignity of all citizens. In partnership with our communities, we strive to preserve the peace and provide for a safe environment for all.