



COUNTY OF ERIE

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National Town Hall Addresses Role of Local Government in Opioid Crisis

Erie, PA – The National Association of Counties (NACo) hosted a virtual town hall today at 2 PM to discuss the role local government and law enforcement play in addressing the national opioid crisis. Erie County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper was a featured panelist in the “Role of Local Elected Officials in Promoting Public Safety & Community Wellness” session, along with Kern County, California Mental Health Director Bill Walker.

Addressing the impact of opioid addiction on Erie County, Dahlkemper said, “We are facing an unprecedented public health crisis – every seven days someone loses their life to a heroin overdose in Erie County. It is important as elected officials that we do our part by facilitating effective response efforts.”

Dahlkemper discussed the efforts in Erie County aimed at saving lives and helping people break the cycle of addiction, such as the Heroin Task Force, police departments carrying Naloxone, county-wide medication return units, the Warm Hand Off program, and the “In Plain Sight” demonstration which walks participants through a staged bedroom to identify signs of drug use.

“Interagency collaboration between local government, public health, social service agencies, and law enforcement is the key to comprehensively addressing addiction,” noted Dahlkemper. “There are certainly ways to expand our efforts, but as a whole, Erie County has been proactive in working to combat opioid addiction and overdose,” said Dahlkemper.

The virtual town hall lasted approximately 90 minutes and drew an audience of over 150 viewers from across the country. This was the third and final town hall in NACo’s Opioid Town Hall series. For more information, please visit www.naco.org/opioidtownhalls.

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