



# Governor Gina M. Raimondo's Task Force on Overdose Prevention and Intervention

June 10, 2020

**DIRECTOR NICOLE ALEXANDER-SCOTT, MD, MPH;** RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

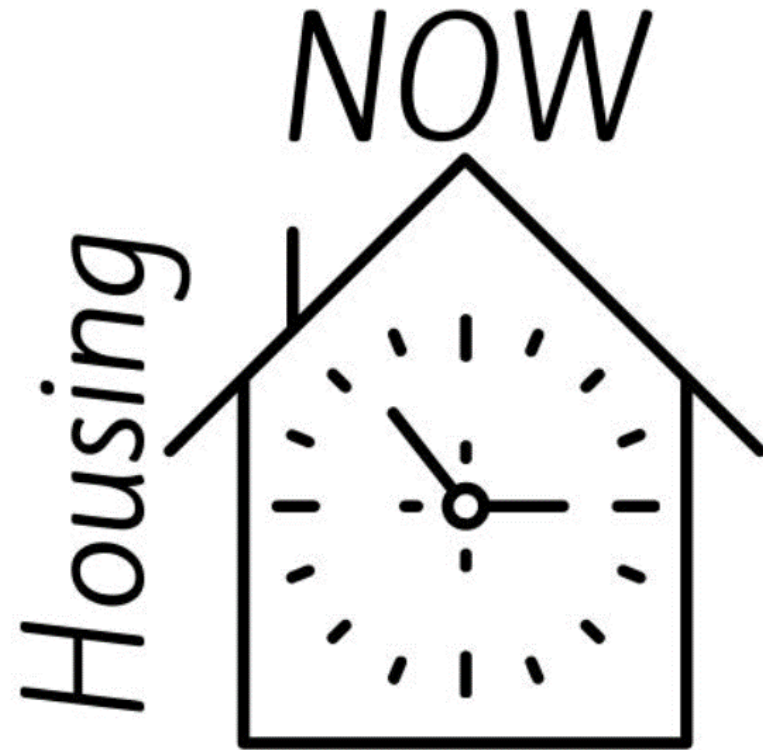
**DIRECTOR KATHRYN POWER, M Ed;** RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE,  
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES, AND HOSPITALS



# WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS



COVID-19  
HOMELESS  
RESPONSE



## Core to Our Work:

- Engagement
- Mitigation
- Sustainability

## Populations

### Experiencing Homelessness

- Living in congregate settings
- Unsheltered population
- Medically complex/older adults

### At-Risk

- Housing insecure
- Frontline workers

### Maintain State Quarantine/Isolation Sites

- Provide safe places to isolate
- Provide wrap-around services
- Develop sustainable staffing plan

01

02

03

04

### Continue Shelter Mitigation Efforts

- Operate hotel shelters through May
- Dispatch mobile testing to shelters
- Develop “new normal” ops plan
- Support PHA/cooling centers

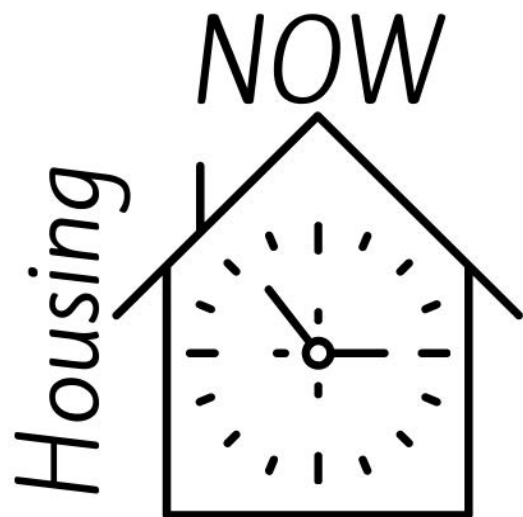
### Shelter Reduction Program

- Implemented a program to reduce numbers in the congregate shelters during the surge (May, June):
  - Two hotels
  - 200 rooms

### Pivot to Long-term Planning

- Develop affordable housing plan
- Enhance response programs
- Increase partner coordination
- Eviction diversion program





## **Housing Now to Combat COVID**

Housing Action Team

### **Strategy:**

- Campaign to secure 100+ private rental housing units to rapidly rehouse households
- Resource Surge to set households up for success as they transition to housing;  
provides connection to health insurance, health care, access to food stamps/nutrition programs and other mainstream benefits, etc...
- Housing Development/Subsidy Strategy to bring more housing units online as part of a Phase 2 of the housing surge

PROVIDENCE



**SAFE  
STATIONS**

**SAFE STATIONS** is a path to recovery.

**[pvdsafestations.com](http://pvdsafestations.com)**



# **Opioid Overdose Prevention: Downtown Providence, RI**

Ellen Cynar, MS, MPH

Director, Healthy Communities Office

City of Providence

# Overview

1. Introduction: Healthy Communities Office
2. Downtown Providence opioid overdose overview
3. Needs assessment process
4. Key themes
5. Challenges





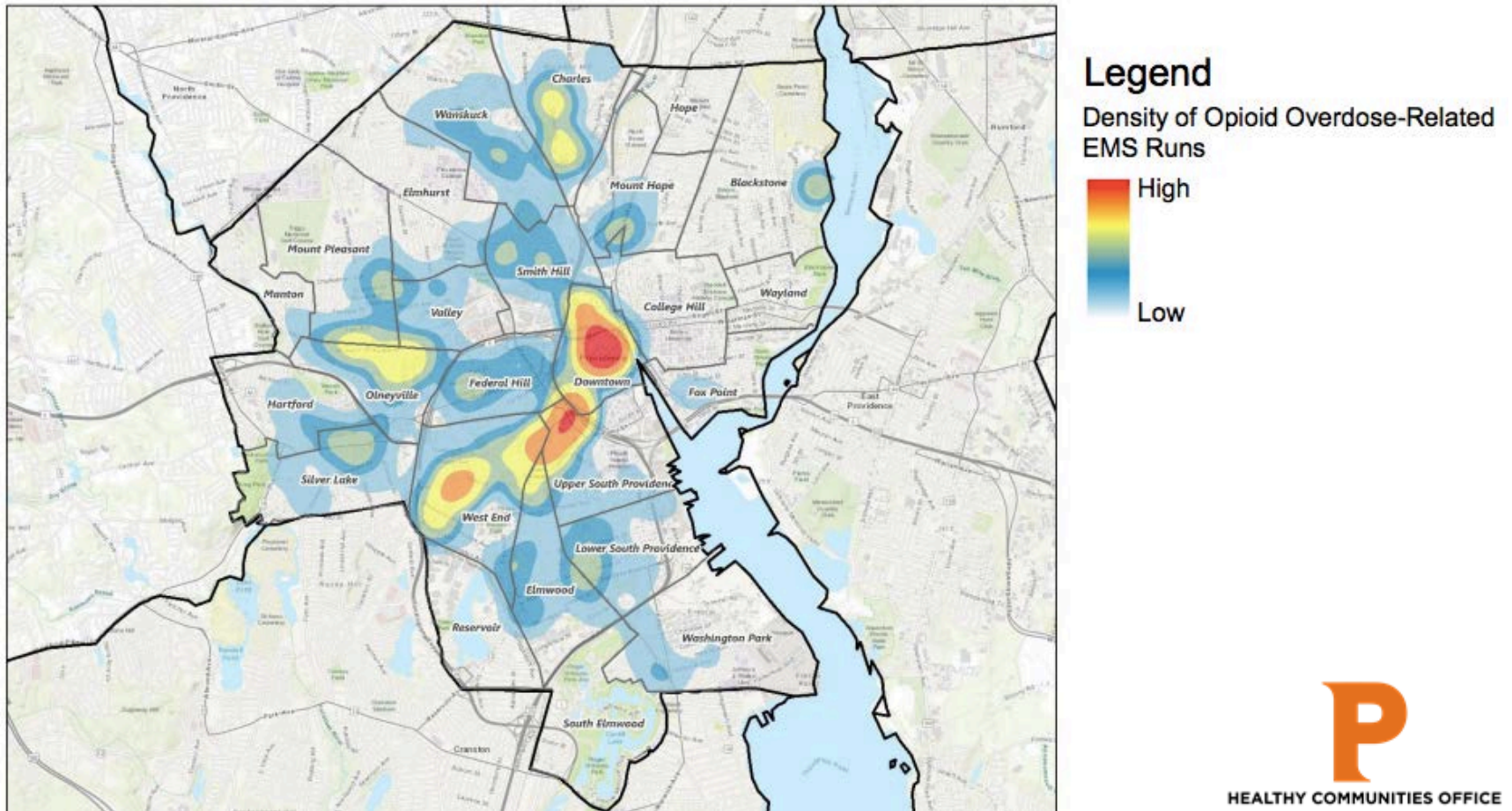
# Healthy Communities Office

- Created in 2012 by Executive Order
- Developed out of the Mayor's Substance Abuse Prevention Council
- Leads the City's health policy and advocacy
- Region 3 prevention coalition backbone



HEALTHY COMMUNITIES OFFICE  
Mayor Jorge O. Elorza | City of Providence

# Downtown Overdose Overview



Source: Rhode Island Department of Health. Rhode Island Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Data: Analyses and Heat Mapping of Opioid Overdose Activity, Presented January 2020.

# Downtown Needs Assessment

- Working with RI Public Health Institute
- Process/Methodology
  - Secondary data compilation and analysis
  - Key informant interviews to identify priority needs, community infrastructure, and recommendations
  - Community engagement
  - Recommendations based on priority health and service needs
  - Action plan portraying community needs, strengths, and opportunities



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# Key Themes (so far)

- Downtown looks very different during Covid-19 pandemic
- Important intersection between behavioral health and housing
- Opportunity for dedicated and coordinated social service supports



# Challenges

- Engagement with Providence Place Mall
- Acute need for basic services
- Community engagement barriers due to social distancing requirements
- How to make recommendations based on current/future Covid-19 conditions



# Contact Information



HEALTHY COMMUNITIES OFFICE  
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# Providing Integrated Services Under Unprecedented Conditions – Lessons from COVID-19



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**VICTA**

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Chief Operating Officer  
**VICTA**

# Overview/Context



- Who is VICTA?
- Impact of COVID-19 on our population and operations
- What's happening with substance use, mental health, and medical needs in our communities?
- Coping with our collective trauma

# Lessons Learned/Next Steps

- Changing drug supply: addressing carfentanil, methamphetamines
- Policy changes: methadone, suboxone, telehealth, and health promotion

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# PUBLIC COMMENT