



CITY OF MANCHESTER

Theodore L. Gatsas
Mayor

August 2, 2017

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500

Re: MANCHESTER, NH | Request for Approval of Emergency Declaration for Opioid Crisis

Dear Mr. President,

I correspond today in support of the emergency declaration requested by The President's Commission on Addiction and Opioid Abuse and respectfully request your approval for this declaration.

The City of Manchester, and the State of New Hampshire, has been at the heart of the heroin, fentanyl and opiate epidemic that our country is faced with. Our first responders, law enforcement, public health network, businesses, recovery community, state and local elected officials, and many more are working diligently to raise awareness and bring forward solutions. Collectively, our community has been steadfast in our dedication to ending this epidemic, we have refused to let this epidemic define our community, we faced it head on, and we are leading the way.

Here in Manchester we have fought this epidemic on multiple fronts:

Our emergency responder community started the nationally recognized Safe Station program. This is a collaborative effort that began on May 4, 2016 that opens up the city's ten firehouses as an access point for those suffering from substance abuse disorder with recovery services. Anyone, at any time, can walk into a city firehouse and ask for help finding treatment. Since the program's inception we have seen an increase in those seeking treatment and a decline in overdoses and fatalities.

Our law enforcement community is collaborating with the NH State Police and the DEA for enforcement operations. The operation named "Granite Hammer" has been extremely successful resulting in drug seizures and arrests. This important program is taking drugs off our streets and putting dealers in jail.

(more)

Our treatment community has expanded services, initiated a mobile crisis response team and opened an outpatient services center and WRAP Around program.

Our recovery community has been an integral partner in our fight as we battle this epidemic which includes our community health clinics, mental health agencies, emergency housing providers and many more.

The City of Manchester, along with many community partners, has also made it a priority to invest in health promotion and prevention initiatives to raise awareness as we battle this epidemic. For your review, I have enclosed a copy of the most recent statistics for the Manchester Safe Station program as well as a copy of the *2016 City of Manchester: Response to the Opioid Crisis Annual Report*.

The requested emergency declaration is an absolutely necessary action that I wholeheartedly support, and I hope that you will also. This declaration has the potential to increase funding directed to the local municipalities where resources are either exhausted or scarce. This declaration has the potential to heighten awareness of this crisis we as a country are facing. This declaration sends a message that we are committed to ending the epidemic rather than letting it define us.

Mr. President, our city, our state and our country are in the midst of a public health crisis unlike anything we've ever seen. Because our public health is compromised our public safety is at risk. On all fronts the City of Manchester has made considerable progress in battling the opioid epidemic, however, there is still much more to be done and I respectfully request your approval for the emergency declaration.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. Please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss the programs in Manchester or have any additional questions. I look forward to your action.

Respectfully,



Theodore L. Gatsas
Mayor, Manchester, NH

Enclosure(s)

cc: His Excellency Christopher Sununu
The Hon. Jeanne Shaheen, US Senate
The Hon. Margaret Wood Hassan, US Senate
The Hon. Carol Shea-Porter, US House of Representatives
The Hon. Anne Kuster, US House of Representatives
Board of Aldermen, City of Manchester
Commissioner John J. Barthelmes, NH Department of Safety
Commissioner Jeffrey A. Meyers, DHHS
Chief Nick Willard, Manchester Police Department
Chief Dan Goonan, Manchester Fire Department
Director Tim Soucy, Manchester Health Department
David Mara, Governor's Advisor on Addiction
Patrick Tufts, Granite United Way