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Press Release

District Attorney Morrissey sponsors training for School Nurses to help students who come to school intoxicated



Sixty school nurses from 20 Norfolk County communities and several regional schools received two full days of "Drug Impairment Training for Educational Professionals" provided by Norfolk District Attorney Michael W. Morrissey through the Curry College's nursing program this week.

"Massachusetts' opiate epidemic is touching every corner of our communities, including our school buildings," District Attorney Morrissey said.

"School nurses are an essential part of the response when a student appears to be intoxicated," District Attorney Morrissey said. "When a student is in trouble with drugs, whether once or as a pattern, it is important to know the signs and symptoms, and which drug you are dealing with. That is where this kind of additional training helps."

Morrissey funded a similar training in January that drew police officers, administrators and a smaller number of nurses across the county. "This is more comprehensive, more tailored for medical professionals, and includes continuing education credentials through Curry. The college also donated use of their facilities."

Trainers included Dr. Jack E. Richman, OD, Nahant police Sgt. Don Decker (Ret.), Middleboro Police Sgt. Deborah Battista and Quincy Police Sergeant and Drug Recognition Expert Donald Allison. Different kinds of drugs create varying symptoms and signs of intoxication, be they pupil dilation or telltale eye movements, speech patterns, or coordination.

"This isn't about evidence collection or prosecution. The purpose is to give nurses the tools they need to meet an emerging, growing problem when they encounter it," Morrissey said. "It can only help connect drug-involved students to whatever immediate intervention they may need and hopefully connect them to the services they need to address the larger issue."

Morrissey called the training an important part of both his ongoing school security enhancement work and his efforts to address the regional opiate epidemic. "If we can help schools constructively intervene in this kind of behavior before it becomes a problem for the criminal courts – that is better for student and for the community."

