

About Us

The Police Assisted Addiction & Recovery Initiative (PAARI) provides support and resources to help law enforcement agencies nationwide create non-arrest pathways to treatment and recovery.

Recognizing that law enforcement has a front row seat to the opioid epidemic and are in a unique position to prevent overdose deaths, in June 2015 the Gloucester Police Department launched the Angel Program, which created a simple, stigma-free entry point to treatment on demand and reframed addiction as a disease, not a crime. PAARI was founded as a nonprofit alongside the Angel Program to help law enforcement agencies create non-arrest programs that prevent and reduce overdose deaths and expand access to treatment and recovery.

Now a national network of more than 400 police departments in 32 states, PAARI primarily supports non-arrest, or early diversion, program models that reach people before they enter the criminal justice system. Programs are customized based on the community and can utilize multiple law enforcement entry points to treatment, including self-referrals to the station and risk or incident-based outreach. Cross-sector collaboration and partnerships are vital to these programs and they are often supported by clinicians, social workers, recovery coaches, and/or trained volunteers.

Any law enforcement or public safety agency that creates non-arrest pathways to treatment can join PAARI free of cost to access resources such as technical assistance, coaching, program templates and tools, seed grants, convenings, connections to treatment providers, a network of like-minded law enforcement agencies, and capacity building and recovery coaches through AmeriCorps. To join or request more information and support, please complete the online form.

Our Mission

- To provide critical support, such as technical assistance, models, seed grants, Recovery Coaches, convenings, and other resources to law enforcement agencies to create and sustain programs that establish a non-arrest pathways to treatment and recovery
- To foster a dialogue about the unique position of law enforcement to address the opioid crisis, remove stigma, and reframe the conversation about addiction as a disease not a crime
- To educate lawmakers and influence state and national policy around treatment access
- To remove barriers to treatment on demand, including connections to treatment scholarships
- To build a law enforcement movement and network of like-minded law enforcement

Our Story

For decades, municipal police officers have been on the front lines of the war on drugs. Until now, they have been solely called upon to attempt to disrupt an ever-increasing supply chain. That meant police officers often found themselves arresting drug addicts as much, if not more so, than drug dealers and traffickers. In most cases, the addicts were only guilty of possessing an illegal, life-ruining substance and they faced arrest, prosecution and prison terms. In the meantime, heroin and opioid addiction has become a severe public health concern in the United States, destroying and often ending lives.

In 2015, Gloucester, Massachusetts Police Chief Leonard Campanello developed a revolutionary new way to fight the war on drugs by doing something about the demand, not just the supply. Under his plan, drug addicts who ask the police department for help will be immediately taken to a hospital and placed in a recovery program. No arrest. No jail.

The Police Assisted Addiction and Recovery Initiative is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to support the Gloucester Police addiction initiatives, to aid other police departments to implement similar programs, and to foster a dialogue around the unique opportunity for police departments to take direct action against the disease of drug addiction in their communities. Working in conjunction with the medical community and science-based recovery programs, police departments can make a difference in their communities by saving lives from drug overdoses, reducing the number of drug addicts and opioid drug demand, thereby devaluing a seemingly endless drug supply.

We also work to remove the stigma associated with drug addiction, turning the conversation toward the disease of addiction rather than the crime of addiction. We work directly with treatment centers to secure scholarships and fully-funded in-patient programs for addicts while working with police departments, pharmacies, and families to put nasal Narcan into as many hands as possible, recognizing that while it is not a panacea, Narcan can save the life of an overdose patient and give that person another opportunity to get into treatment and fight their disease.