



Press Release...

from State Representative La Shawn K. Ford

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 9, 2019

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

State Rep. La Shawn K. Ford

773-378-5902

Ford, Davis and Community Leaders Push for Emergency Prevention Funding for Opioid Crisis

CHICAGO - State Representative La Shawn K. Ford, Congressman Danny K. Davis and community leaders will hold a press conference on Saturday, May 11, 2019 at 10 a.m. at the Westside Community Triage and Wellness Center to push for emergency prevention funding for the West Side's current and ongoing opioid crisis. The campaign will call for long-term funding for the prevention of substance use disorders.

"We are entering National Prevention Week, which will take place May 12-18, 2019," said Ford. "We call on community and government agencies to join us in advancing prevention efforts during this current opioid overdose crisis. We want to prevent people from using drugs in the first place, and we want to prevent people from dying of overdoses. We are advocating for state funding to provide emergency money to West Side agencies and the West Side Heroin Task Force in their efforts to fight the opioid crisis."

A recent Chicago Tribune article notes that persons with opioid use disorder have a higher risk for suicides, signaling the need for additional mental health treatment in areas severely affected by the opioid overdose crisis, including the West Side of Chicago. Previously severe cuts to mental health funding have affected community agencies ability to respond to mental health problems associated with the current opioid overdose epidemic. Treating mental health conditions may prevent people from starting to use drugs like heroin.

People can be prevented from dying of an overdose if they are treated quickly with naloxone, or Narcan. Ford is advocating for additional funding for a campaign to increase community awareness about how naloxone can save lives, especially in highly affected areas. This campaign will include increased access to naloxone.

Donald Dew of Habilitative Systems Inc. is one of many community leaders joining Rep. Ford in the effort voicing concern for the crucial opioid prevention funding.

"It is imperative that we seek all the resources we can to end this crisis," said Dew. "Fighting the opioid crisis will be a long battle not only for the West Side, but for Illinois as well. Our organizations plan on sending a letter to the governor to request emergency funding for the West Side. That is why it is important for community agencies with a stake in this fight to join our letter campaign to show Illinois the severity of the situation we are facing."

Leaders will meet for the press conference at The Westside Community Triage & Wellness Center. The center is a strategic partnership between Habilitative Systems, Inc., Bobby E. Wright Comprehensive Mental Health Center., and Cook County Health and Hospital System to mitigate violence and trauma on Chicago's West Side.

WHO: State Representative La Shawn K. Ford; Congressman Danny K. Davis; Donald Dew (Habilitative Systems, Inc.); Dr. Rashad Saafir (Bobby E Wright CBHC); Jackie Glass (Hartgrove Behavioral Health); Brad Cummings (The Voice News); Al Orsello (Prevention Partnership, Inc.); The Loretto Hospital; other stakeholders West Garfield Park; Community Stakeholders (Fathers Who Care); Chicago Recovery Alliance; other stakeholders

WHAT: Press Conference Calling for Emergency Opioid Prevention Funding

WHEN: Saturday, May 11, 2019, 10 a.m.

WHERE: Westside Community Triage and Wellness Center, 4133 W. Madison, Chicago, Illinois 60624

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