

[Springfield](#)

Tapestry Health awarded Mass DPH contract for 'mobile addiction-services van' for Springfield area

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SPRINGFIELD -- The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) today announced the awarding of an annual contract to Tapestry Health of Springfield for the deployment of a mobile addiction-services van to aid those most at risk of overdosing from opioid use.

DPH announced it is awarding \$1.4 million in annual funding to deploy a van in Springfield, but also in Worcester, Boston, and in Fall River and New Bedford.

The vans will specialize in providing care to people with substance abuse issues and other medical complications associated with drug use.

Amy Davis, director of marketing and communications for Tapestry Health said the funding will allow the agency to put another vehicle in its Mobile Harm Reduction Services program.

The agency earlier this year deployed two vans that go the community to where help is needed. This will allow them to have a third, she said.

Under the DPH plan, the mobile vans will provide treatment and basic clinical care including medications for addiction treatment, naloxone distribution and training, and syringe exchange. They will also offer primary care services such as

wound care, vaccinations, screenings for communicable diseases including HIV and tuberculosis, and referrals to behavioral health services and specialty care.

“The disproportionate impact on underserved communities and populations requires that we bring treatment and care to people who otherwise would not get it,” said Public Health Commissioner Monica Bharel. “These vans will bring treatment directly into areas most affected and connect them to potentially life-saving services.”

She said the goal is to provide care to individuals not receiving services through other means, initiate medication for addiction treatment, and provide connections to long-term, community-based care in

an effort to prevent overdose deaths, support long-term recovery, and improve health and quality of life for vulnerable individuals.

“Offering low threshold, low barrier access to treatment, clinical care and harm reduction services is crucial,” said Deirdre Calvert, Director of DPH’s Bureau of Substance Addiction Services. “These vans will provide additional access and help us to connect with individuals we’ve been unable to reach before.”

Other agencies named in the grant are Boston Health Care for the Homeless in Boston, Mass Memorial Medical Center in Worcester, and Stanley Street Treatment and Resources in New Bedford. The Kraft Family Foundation has donated the vans in Worcester and Springfield.

Davis said the vans are just ordinary cargo vans. They are staffed with health care aides and a nurse, and carry many of the same items available at Tapestry clinics. These include medical supplies, clean syringes, bleach, contraceptives, hygiene kits, but also sock, water and snacks.

They can provide supplies, and also basic medical services.

The idea behind the mobile vans is to go out into the community to assist people who may not be able to come to a Tapestry location, she said.

“If people can’t come to us, we can go to them,” she said.