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Contact: ONDCP Public Affairs
MediaInquiry@ondcp.eop.gov or (202) 395-6618

White House Drug Policy Office Awards \$625,000 to Local Coalition to Prevent Youth Substance Use in Chambersburg

Grants Support Administration Efforts to Emphasize Prevention Among Youth

Washington D.C. – Today, Richard Baum, Acting Director of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), announced 719 Drug-Free Communities (DFC) Support Program grants totaling \$89 million. This represents the largest-ever number of DFC grantees in a single year since the program’s founding. The grants will provide local community coalitions funding to prevent youth substance use, including prescription drugs, marijuana, tobacco, and alcohol. Chambersburg Cares from Chambersburg, Pennsylvania was one of the grant recipients and will receive \$625,000 (\$125,000 per year for five years) in DFC grant funds to involve and engage their local community to prevent substance use among youth.

“We’re losing more than 60,000 people per year to drug overdose, but if we can stop young people from starting to use drugs in the first place, we can save lives,” **said Richard Baum, Acting Director of National Drug Control Policy.** “Our local DFC coalitions are a key part of this effort because they are bringing together parents groups, schools, healthcare professionals, law enforcement, businesses, and others to prevent drug use and improve the health of the community.”

“Our goal is to make Chambersburg a safe and drug-free place for our youth,” said Christy Unger, Chambersburg Cares Mobilizer. “Prevention is a powerful tool to counteract drug use in our community, and we will use this funding to help youth in Chambersburg make healthy choices about substance use.”

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is responsible for the day-to-day management of the DFC Program.

“SAMHSA looks forward to working with its community partners in implementing evidence-based practices to impact the community and help youth,” **said Dr. Elinore McCance-Katz, Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use.**

Prescription drug abuse prevention is one of the core measures of effectiveness for local DFC coalitions, and coalitions nationwide have led innovative opioid prevention initiatives. DFC’s [2016 National Evaluation End-of-Year Report](#) found that at least 97% of middle school and 93% of high

school youth report that they have not illicitly used prescription drugs in the past 30-days in DFC communities. Additionally, perception of risk of illicit prescription drug use was generally high (80-84%). The report also found that perceived risk of illicit use of prescription drugs was very similar to perceived risk of tobacco use (80-83%), and was higher than for both alcohol (69-73%) and marijuana use (53-73%). Finally, the report detailed that peer disapproval of illicit prescription drug use increased significantly for both age groups within all DFC coalitions.

[The Drug-Free Communities \(DFC\) Support Program](#), created by the Drug-Free Communities Act of 1997, is the Nation's leading effort to mobilize communities to prevent youth substance use. Directed by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), in partnership with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the DFC Program provides grants to community coalitions to strengthen the infrastructure among local partners to create and sustain a reduction in local youth substance use.

The DFC Program provides grants of up to \$625,000 over five years to community coalitions that facilitate youth and adult participation at the community level in local youth drug use prevention efforts.

According to [2016 data](#), an estimated 3,200 young people per day between the ages of 12 and 17 used drugs for the first time in the preceding year. Research also indicates that high school seniors are more likely to smoke marijuana than cigarettes. 88% of DFC coalitions indicate that they focus on heroin, prescription drugs, or both, which is reflective of the ongoing national opioid crisis. Furthermore, 16% of high school seniors in 2016 reported binge drinking (i.e., 5 or more drinks in a row) in the past two weeks.

Recognizing that local problems need local solutions, DFC-funded coalitions engage multiple sectors of the community and employ a variety of environmental strategies to address local drug problems. Coalitions are comprised of community leaders, parents, youth, teachers, religious and fraternal organizations, healthcare and business professionals, law enforcement, and media. By involving the community in a solution-oriented approach, DFC also helps those youth at risk for substance use recognize that the majority of our Nation's youth choose not to use drugs.

As a newly funded DFC coalition, Chambersburg Cares is an initiative of Healthy Communities Partnership (HCP). HCP has been serving the Franklin County area for over 26 years, with a focus on promoting healthy initiatives and choices for residents, with a focus on prevention and education. Many of the agency's programs and services have been directed toward youth, and helping youth and families make healthier decisions that can impact their entire lives.

"The grant award from ONDCP will help continue and support ongoing local efforts that HCP and its partners have been working on to assist our communities in preventing youth substance use for several years," said Karen Johnston, Executive Director of Healthy Communities Partnership. "We are looking forward to expanding our efforts and working with our national, state and local partners toward healthy youth and healthy communities."

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