

DELAWARE



JASON MINTO/THE NEWS JOURNAL

Daphne Chaniz-Rico (left), health service administrator with Connections Community Support Programs, talks with nurses Heather Battee, Merrisa Williams and Shirley Broome about new procedures at the organization's detox center in Harrington.

Detox center gets \$1M federal loan

Harrington facility aims to renovate, expand services

JEN RINI THE NEWS JOURNAL

Delaware's downstate detox center on Thursday was awarded a one-time \$1 million federal loan to support renovations to the facility's commercial kitchen and administrative offices and add more counseling space.

It is critical to equip rural communities with resources to fight the opioid epidemic, said U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack.

Delaware's loan is part of the USDA's Community Facilities Direct Loan Program, which supports essential community facilities and services in rural areas.

There are multiple challenges these communities face, he added. Some experience issues that stem from being part of a value system that honors self-reliance and "toughing it out," while others lack transportation or stable employment. Access to long-term treatment and medical professionals presents additional barriers.

"We are constantly looking as well to try to improve the economy of rural areas so people have a reason to think that their tomorrow is going to be better than today," Vilsack said.

The state-funded detox facility in Harrington in Kent County opened in November, welcoming people 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The facility was awarded a \$5.05 million loan last year, officials said.

Managed by Connections Community Support Programs, the center has 16 beds for people needing intense detox with methadone or buprenorphine, drugs used as replacement therapies for heroin to halt cravings; 12 short-term-stay beds so nurses can observe people for 23 hours and determine their next level of care; and about 30 to 100 slots available for intensive outpatient services such as counseling.

The loan will specifically help fund an on-site family therapy center and primary care office, said Cathy McKay, president and chief executive officer of Connections Community Support Programs.

There won't be any additional beds, she added, but Connections will be opening 24 sober living beds across the state at the end of June for people who are leaving

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TOM VILSACK, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SECRETARY

detox centers. The sober living spaces will have a counselor on site, but will not do any assisted treatment.

The state is plagued with higher than average painkiller abuse and a rising number of overdose deaths. There were 180 suspected drug overdose deaths in Delaware in 2015. In 2013 and 2014, there were 160 and 189 deaths, respectively. Those overdoses can include heroin and alcohol.

A series of stories in The News Journal looked at how more innovative treatment options are desperately needed in Delaware and how more and more young people go out of state to get care. The News Journal went to Gloucester, Massachusetts, and Delray Beach, Florida, to see innovative treatment strategies at work.

Even with the best efforts of law enforcement and treatment experts, The News Journal reported that nothing has slowed Delaware's heroin problem. Many struggle to navigate piecemeal services, and insurance may not even cover treatment once they get to a facility's door.

Higher-than-average painkiller abuse and ever-increasing overdose deaths are driving a statewide effort to push doctors to follow more stringent regulations when they prescribe pain medications.

Those struggling with addiction can call the state's 24/7 Crisis Services at (800) 652-2929 in New Castle County or (800) 345-6785 in Kent and Sussex counties to be connected to treatment services.

Visit www.HelpIsHereDE.com for addiction treatment and recovery services in Delaware and nearby states.

POLICE & FIRE

NEW CASTLE COUNTY

PHARMACY ROBBED: Delaware State Police are currently investigating the Wednesday afternoon armed robbery of a **New Castle**-area pharmacy. At approximately 1:13 p.m. a male suspect entered the Rite Aid pharmacy, located at 501 E. Basin Road, said State Police Master Cpl. Jeffrey Hale in a statement. The suspect displayed a knife, confronted a female employee and demanded money from the cash registers, Hale said. The employee complied with the suspect's demands and turned over an undisclosed amount of money to him, according to police. He then exited the business and was last seen fleeing toward the William Penn Village Apartments. The clerk was not injured. The suspect was described as a white male, standing 5-feet-3-inches to 5-feet-6-inches tall, weighing 130 to 145 pounds, and was last seen wearing a black hooded sweatshirt, dark colored sweat pants, dark boots and bandanna covering part of his face. Anyone with information should contact police at 302-365-8566.

MOTORCYCLE CRASH: A crash Thursday morning in **Ogletown** injured a motorcycle rider, an official said. The crash happened at about 7:20 in the unit block of McIntosh Plaza when a motorcycle was struck by a vehicle, said Cpl. David McKinney Jr., a spokesperson with New Castle County Paramedics. The rider, a 29-year-old man, was thrown from his motorcycle and struck another vehicle before landing on the ground, McKinney said. He was rushed to Christiana Hospital for injuries to his arms, legs and hips. He was admitted in stable condition, McKinney said. State police are investigating the crash.

CAR CRASH: A car crash Thursday morning in **Elsmere** briefly closed a roadway and injured one person. The crash was reported around 8:40 a.m. in the 200 block of Tamarack Ave., according to scanner reports. One person sustained non-life threatening injuries, said an official with the New Castle County fire board. The crash affected traffic in the area for about an hour.

BUSINESS FIRE: Several area fire companies put out a fire at a **New Castle**-area business Thursday morning. According to scanner reports, the fire was reported at about 7:50 a.m. at an auto mechanic shop in the 400 block of Churchmans Road. Reportedly, a truck was on fire inside the business. A worker, who wished to remain anonymous, said the fire began due to welding work being done in one of the vehicle bays. The fire was placed under control at about 8:25 a.m., according to scanner reports. The State Fire Marshal's Office are investigating. No injuries were reported.

KENT COUNTY

MALL CARJACKING: Dover police are investigating a carjacking that happened Wednesday afternoon at the **Dover** Mall, an official said. The victim told police that two men allegedly approached him in the parking lot of the Dick's Sporting Goods Wednesday afternoon at about 3:30 p.m., said Cpl. Mark Hoffman, a spokesman with the Dover Police Department. The suspects, who were said to be carrying a pipe and a baton, ordered him back into the car, Hoffman said. Another suspect, a woman, entered the vehicle and sat in the backseat, Hoffman said. The victim was told to drive southbound and was then eventually told to exit the vehicle on West Woodside Dr. in **Milford**, Hoffman said. The victim, who had his cell phone, driver's license and cash taken from him, ran to nearby residence and called police, Hoffman said. His vehicle was found nearby by Milford and Delaware State Police, Hoffman said. Anyone with information into this incident can call the Dover Police Department at 302-736-7130.

VAPE STORE ROBBERY: Dover police is investigating a robbery at a local vape store, an official said. The burglary happened between 6 a.m. and about 6:30 a.m. Wednesday morning when a man forced entry into 55 Vape located in the 1000 block of Forrest Ave., said Cpl. Mark Hoffman, a spokesman with the Dover Police Department. The suspect stole a safe which contained an undisclosed amount of cash, Hoffman said. Anyone with information can call the Dover Police Department at 302-736-7130.

SUSSEX COUNTY

BURGLARY ARREST: Delaware State Police and the Smyrna Police Department have arrested a **Smyrna** man following a string of burglaries and attempted burglaries they say he committed over the past several months. On Wednesday, at approximately 7:30 a.m., state troopers, with the assistance of officers from the Smyrna Police Department, apprehended Thomas Norris, 54, as he was exiting the Delasoft business, located at 92 Reads Way, New Castle, which he had just burglarized, said Master Cpl. Jeffrey Hale. Norris, who was in possession of a stolen laptop computer when he was apprehended, is suspected in the burglary or attempted burglary of nine businesses located throughout New Castle County and northern Kent County, Hale said. In each case, Norris would enter an unsecured office building and then force his way into separate businesses inside, Hale said. He would then remove electronic items from the businesses before fleeing. State Police Burglary Unit detectives and the Smyrna Police Department began a joint investigation after noticing a trend in the style of burglaries, which began in April of 2016. During the investigation, which included the review of video surveillance footage, investigators were able to identify Norris as the suspect and was arrested and charged with six counts of third-degree burglary, two counts of attempted burglary, possession of burglary tools, four counts of theft over \$1,500, criminal mischief and theft under \$1,500. He was committed to the Howard Young Correctional Institution for lack of \$29,500 secured bail.

HEROIN ARRESTS: Seaford police arrested three people Wednesday after officers said they found the trio in possession of 39 bags of heroin. Officers were on patrol on Norman Eskridge Highway about 11 a.m. when they saw 40-year-old Takoma Medley, wanted for arrest, enter the passenger's side of a parked vehicle, according to a statement from the police department. Police were taking Medley into custody when they observed several bags of suspected heroin in the vehicle, according to the statement. The two other people occupying the vehicle were then arrested, letting police recover 39 bags of heroin. Medley, of **Seaford**, was charged with heroin possession, possession of drug paraphernalia and conspiracy, and was later released after posting a \$2,250 unsecured bond. Kenneth West, 32, of Rehoboth, and Jason Mowbray, 37, of Hurllock, Maryland, were also arrested, charged with heroin possession, possession of drug paraphernalia and conspiracy, and later released after posting \$2,250 unsecured bonds.

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