



Bluegrass.org News Release

1351 Newtown Pike, Lexington, Kentucky 40511 • 859.253.1686 • www.bluegrass.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 17, 2016 - Lexington, KY

Contact Bethany Langdon bhlangdon@bluegrass.org
or Tara Stanfield tcstanfiel@bluegrass.org

Bluegrass.org and the Cabinet for Health and Family Services Hold Opiate Forum

Bluegrass.org and the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, along with experts from the Hazelden Betty Ford Clinic presented a forum to address opiate use in Kentucky on Monday, May 17 in Lexington.

The purpose of the forum was three-fold: 1) to help Kentuckians identify resources to prevent and treat individuals with substance use disorders; 2) to rally community efforts to address this public health issue; and 3) to develop a better understanding of the opioid abuse epidemic.

Dr. LaTonia Sweet, chief medical officer at Bluegrass.org said, "We have come a very long way in the fact that we actually had this forum today. We wouldn't have seen that ten years ago. But, we do have a long way to go in understanding this is actually a disease and not a moral failing and we need to treat it as a disease."

Overdose deaths in Kentucky have steadily risen. Each day four Kentuckians will lose their life in a drug-related fatality according to the Office of Drug Control Policy.

The forum was part of a grant funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to establish a new system of care to treat pregnant and postpartum women. With the support of this grant, Bluegrass.org established the Bluegrass Pregnancy and Addiction Network. The network is a multi-disciplinary approach that combines behavioral health, family practice, and OB care to support pregnant and postpartum women in recovery utilizing medication assisted treatment, peer support, and case management.

Tara Stanfield, regional director of substance abuse operations at Bluegrass.org, was instrumental in developing the Bluegrass Pregnancy and Addition Network. "When talking about treating individuals with substance use disorders, one could argue there is no more important window of time than during a woman's pregnancy and those crucial first months after the baby is born. It's been exciting to watch the treatment world team up with local hospitals and primary care providers to put this issue front and center. Building this network has already opened doors that previously didn't exist for our patients. I'm on the edge of my seat to see what happens next," said Stanfield. To learn more about the Bluegrass Pregnancy and Addiction Network call 859.253.1686.

###

Bluegrass.org is a non-profit Community Mental Health Center located in Lexington and serving 17 counties in Central Kentucky since 1966 in the areas of mental health, substance use and intellectual and developmental disabilities. For support and appointments call the 24-Hour Help Line at 1.800.928.8000.