

CITY OF BALTIMORE

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Baltimore City Health Department Buprenorphine Initiative Wins Prestigious Award

BALTIMORE, MD (September 14, 2009) – The Baltimore City Health Department’s Buprenorphine Initiative is one of 23 local public health programs to receive a Model Practice Award from the National Association of County and City Health Officials.

“I am proud of the Health Department’s Buprenorphine Initiative. It has significantly increased access and capacity in publicly funded treatment centers for addicts across our City,” said Mayor Dixon. “In 2008, 84 fatal drug overdoses did not occur, and in my book that is 84 people whose lives were saved. This award is well earned and deserved.”

The Baltimore Buprenorphine Initiative (BBI) is a collaborative effort among Baltimore Substance Abuse Systems, Inc., Baltimore HealthCare Access, Inc., and the Baltimore City Health Department. The initiative was launched in October of 2006. The program has expanded access to effective treatment for heroin addiction in the city of Baltimore and linked patients to health insurance and primary medical care.

“We are proud to receive NACCHO’s Model Practice Award. The award is evidence of our shared commitment to developing responsive, innovative and effective substance abuse treatment programs that improve the health of local citizens,” said Gregory C. Warren, President and CEO of Baltimore Substance Abuse Systems, Inc.

The Model Practice Awards program honors initiatives – including programs, resources, and tools – that demonstrate how local health departments and their community partners can effectively collaborate to address local public health concerns. A committee of peers selected the Baltimore Buprenorphine Initiative from a group of 116 applications.

“The City’s treatment system has a proven track record of success in addressing substance abuse in Baltimore City,” said Interim Commissioner Farrow.

“BBI has served to enhance and improve outcomes while bringing together substance abuse treatment centers, community health centers and primary care physicians to collectively fight heroin addiction in Baltimore City,” said Kathleen Westcoat, president of Baltimore HealthCare Access, Inc.

Baltimore's initiative promotes individualized, patient-centered buprenorphine therapy in conjunction with behavioral treatment. The initiative promotes a continuum of care that includes outpatient substance abuse treatment, medication induction, as well as maintenance and stabilization in the medical care system. The integration of the publicly funded treatment system with the medical care system is a unique model of service delivery.

For further information about buprenorphine treatment in particular or substance abuse treatment in general, please contact Carlos Hardy, director of Public Affairs for bSAS, at 410-637-1900, ext. 289, or via e-mail at chardy@bsasinc.org , or visit the bSAS Website at www.bsasinc.org For more information about the NACCHO Model Practice Awards, go to www.naccho.org.

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