



PROVIDENCE SAFE STATIONS

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

City of Providence, RI
June 2019



BACKGROUND

In January 2018, the City of Providence launched Providence Safe Stations in response to the high level of opioid overdoses occurring in Providence and Rhode Island. Providence Safe Stations is modeled after programs in Manchester and Nashua, New Hampshire. The overarching goal of Providence Safe Stations is to reduce drug overdose-related deaths in Providence and Rhode Island. By using a collaborative public safety and public health approach with a unique peer recovery model, the program seeks to increase substance-dependent individuals' ability to connect with treatment and recovery services. It is a partnership between the City of Providence (Fire/EMS Department, Healthy Communities Office, Mayor's Office) and The Providence Center's Anchor Recovery program.

This implementation guide provides an overview of Providence's Safe Stations program and operations, as well as recommendations and considerations for municipalities starting a new Safe Stations program in their community. Every community is different and will require unique considerations depending on the structure of the municipality's fire and EMS services; landscape of treatment and recovery services; key demographics; and funding capacity. Providence is regularly making adjustments to our program in order to best reach individuals with substance use disorders.

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CONTENTS

- Problem 4
- Program Origin 4
- Program Overview 5
- Process & Considerations 6
- Communications 8
- Funding 8
- Partnerships 9
- Appreciation 9

PROBLEM

Opioid overdoses in the United States are a public health crisis. Until recently, Rhode Island had one of the highest rates of death due to drug overdoses in the country (1). While Rhode Island experienced a slight drop in overdose deaths in 2018, deaths from illicit drugs, specifically heroin and fentanyl, are of significant concern. The overdose crisis has been particularly evident in Providence given that it serves as the urban center of Rhode Island; accounts for a significant portion of the state's population; and houses many of the state's resources including transportation hubs, entertainment, social services, and medical services. In 2018, approximately one in four of Rhode Island's overdose deaths occurred in Providence, disproportionately affecting the Capital City (2).

PROGRAM ORIGIN

In the first two weeks of September 2017, drug overdose activity increased in the city of Providence, according to the RI Surveillance Response Intervention. In response, the City of Providence initiated Providence Safe Stations, which launched in January 2018. Providence Safe Stations is based on successful program models from Manchester and Nashua, New Hampshire that also use fire stations as entry points for individuals seeking help with substance use disorders. Other cities and regions are also adopting a Safe Stations model of using fire stations, or other city-owned facilities, for treatment and recovery connections. Examples of other Safe Stations models include:

- Manchester, NH: www.manchesternh.gov/departments/fire/safe-station
- Nashua, NH: www.nashuanh.gov/1109/Safe-Stations
- Anne Arundel County, MD: www.aacounty.org/departments/sao/rehab-programs/safe-stations/index.html

1) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Available: www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/data/statedeaths.html.

2) Prevent Overdose RI. Available: www.preventoverdoseri.org.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, any person can go to one of Providence's 12 fire stations, speak with the staff on duty, and immediately get connected to treatment support and services. The Providence Center, Rhode Island's leading mental health and addiction treatment provider, facilitates connections to Providence-area community-based treatment support and services through its Anchor Recovery program.

Providence Safe Stations is designed with the goal of connecting individuals to recovery at a time and place where they are ready to seek it. An individual recovering from an overdose and/or naloxone administration is almost never ready to seek recovery. Thus, while Providence EMS is frequently a first line of defense for individuals experiencing an overdose, EMTs have very limited opportunities to engage with these individuals proactively around treatment. Providence Safe Stations provides the space and time for these important connections.

Providence Safe Stations is also a flexible program to address any substance use disorder. While the current focus is on opioid overdoses, the landscape of substance use and addiction changes over time. Providence Safe Stations is able to address current and future trends in substance use disorders, including polysubstance use.



ANY FIRE STATION, ANY TIME

When you're ready, we're HERE for you.

PROCESS AND CONSIDERATIONS

What happens at a Providence fire station?

The City of Providence has integrated fire and emergency medical services. As such, all Providence Fire Department members are trained as EMT cardiac or a higher level.

1. Participant enters Providence fire station, greeted by trained fire/EMS professionals, and taken to a designated, private area.
2. Participant asked if they have any drugs or paraphernalia on them. If yes, drugs and/or paraphernalia are put in locked drop box.
3. Participant's vital signs taken. If participant has unstable vital signs, transfer to hospital.
4. Fire/EMS professionals call peer recovery specialists and wait with participant until arrival.

Recommendations and considerations

- Understand the relationship between fire and EMS in your community.
- Provide a safe and welcoming environment for participants.
- Install visible Safe Stations signage outside of all station entrances with phone number if station is closed.
- Have EMS electronic records include unique overdose indicator for tracking.
- Ensure clear buy-in from fire department leadership and membership.
- Materials: sharps boxes, tables and chairs, intake forms.

Resources

- Standard Operating Procedures
- Intake Form and purchasing specifications
- Fire stations signs

PROCESS AND CONSIDERATIONS, CONT.

How does Safe Stations connect with recovery?

The Providence Center's Anchor Recovery Program serves as the bridge to treatment and recovery services across Rhode Island. The Providence Safe Stations program builds off of Anchor Recovery's nationally recognized peer recovery specialist model. Peer recovery specialists are trained professionals who are also in recovery. Their lived experience helps individuals feel connected to someone who understands how they're feeling. To learn more about Anchor Recovery visit: www.AnchorRecovery.org.

1. Peer recovery specialists receive call from fire station.
2. Team of two (2) peer recovery specialists arrive within 15 minutes of call.
3. Meet with individual seeking help to talk about their needs and potential options for treatment and recovery.
4. Identify and coordinate next steps for individual.
5. Ensure regular follow-up with individual as part of Anchor Recovery's standard procedures.
6. Regularly update team with updates on program challenges, opportunities, and data. Ensure participant data confidentiality.

Recommendations and considerations

- Quick arrival time; the window for when individuals are ready to get help can be narrow.
- Respond in teams of two peer recovery specialists.
- Ensure a female-identifying peer recovery specialist responds to a female-identifying individual.
- Develop strong relationships with treatment and recovery providers in your community; understand who to call directly based on the time of the day.
- Define your Safe Stations participant transportation policies.
- Materials: basic office supplies, snacks.

COMMUNICATION

Providence utilizes a wide variety of outreach and communication methods to get the word out about Safe Stations including: social media, local newspaper print ads, radio, bus banners, billboards, postcards, and flyers. Effective communication is critical to create awareness about your Safe Stations program for potential participants, as well as friends and family of someone who is struggling with a substance use disorder. Effective Safe Stations communication can also normalize the conversation around substance use disorders and seeking help. To find out more about Providence Safe Stations visit: www.PVDSafeStations.com.

Recommendations and considerations

- Develop materials that have languages most spoken by community.
- Consider messaging that speaks both to individuals seeking services and family and friends who might bring someone in.
- Use de-stigmatizing language to normalize the conversation about substance use disorders.
- Collaborate with other organizations for outreach (e.g. co-tabling at events).
- Establish backbone administrator to run point of contact for program.

Resources

- Destigmatizing language recommendations
- Outreach materials examples

FUNDING

The City of Providence provides in-kind Safe Stations resources for Fire/EMS services, communication design, language translation, and backbone administrative support. The City and The Providence Center raise funds to support peer recovery specialists and the production and purchase of outreach materials (e.g. radio ads, flyers). Providence Safe Stations has been funded through a variety of sources including the University of Baltimore and the RI Department of Behavioral Healthcare Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals.

Recommendations and considerations

- Ensure dedicated funding for fire station to recovery connections (e.g. peer recovery specialist).
- Ensure dedicated funding for printing and outreach materials.
- Have a multi-sectoral Safe Stations team to leverage diverse funding opportunities.

PARTNERSHIPS

State of RI Overdose Prevention Action Plan

Providence Safe Stations is in alignment with the State of Rhode Island's Overdose Prevention Action Plan, which includes expansion of peer recovery services and access to treatment options for long-term recovery. The RI Department of Health and RI Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals provide leadership and support to the program. To find out more about the State's plan, information about your community, and state-level partners visit:

www.PreventOverdoseRI.org.

RI Regional Prevention Task Forces

The State of RI has seven Regional Prevention Task Force Coalitions that are responsible for overseeing the planning and delivery of substance use prevention activities within the municipalities that comprise the region. The Coalitions convene parents, youth, law enforcement, schools, healthcare, businesses, government officials and community leaders to play an active role in planning and service delivery. The regional Coalitions provide administrative oversight, funding, and other needed resources to support the regional prevention plan. The RI Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals, under the RI Substance Abuse Prevention Act, funds the regional Coalitions. To find out more about the regional Coalition in your community and how they can help support Safe Stations visit: *www.ripvention.org.*

APPRECIATION

The City of Providence would like to acknowledge the many community-based, state, and regional partners that support the Providence Safe Stations program. Providence Safe Stations is a collaborative and compassionate public health, public safety, and community response to substance use disorders in Providence.

- The Providence Center's Anchor Recovery and Anchor MORE
- RI Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals
- RI Department of Health
- Members of the Providence Fire/EMS Department
- Project Weber/RENEW
- Mayor's Substance Abuse Prevention Council
- Health Resources and Services Administration - Region 1
- Providence Community Health Centers



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