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Established in 1945, DuPage County Health Department promotes physical and emotional health; prevents illness injury and disability; protects health from environmental risk factors, and strives to assure the provision of accessible, quality service.

October 7, 2019

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **DuPage County Health Department Announces \$1.16 Million Grant to Address Opioids**

**DUPAGE COUNTY**—Today, the DuPage County Health Department and its partners, the DuPage County Sheriff’s Office and DuPage County Coroner’s Office, announced the receipt of a three-year, \$1.16 million U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) grant to address the high rates of opioid use and overdoses, and the lack of treatment options for incarcerated people in DuPage County.

The Health Department will coordinate with the offices of the Sheriff and Coroner to develop a model to address service and data gaps regarding opioid use in the County.

Health Department Executive Director Karen Ayala said, “We are pleased to continue to work with our partners to successfully bring resources to our community to address the opioid epidemic. This grant will allow us to address opioid use and misuse from many viewpoints.”

An important feature of program is providing evidence-based substance use treatment for those incarcerated in the DuPage County Jail.

Said James Mendrick, DuPage County Sheriff, “I’m excited to once again partner with the DuPage County Health Department to help give hope and purpose to people who are incarcerated.”

Sheriff Mendrick added, “This Bureau of Justice Assistance grant will improve many lives that suffer from opioid use disorder. This is yet another powerful tool we will use to fight the opioid epidemic. The Sheriff’s Office and Health Department are showing the world what we can do with meaningful collaboration and consolidation of efforts to truly help make a difference.”

The BJA funds will make possible a new effort, the Opioid Fatality Review Team, to be led by the DuPage County Coroner’s Office. Opioid use data will be analyzed and used to reduce overdoses and inform policy and legislation.

Dr. Richard Jorgensen, DuPage County Coroner stated, “Since 2013, when heroin deaths began to escalate, it has been our goal to save lives.”

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“My office will study what common themes and risk factors led to each overdose-related death. With accurate data, the Overdose Fatality Review Team will inform policy makers, funders and community members to best combat this issue and reduce the devastating impact the use opioid crisis has had on our residents,” Dr. Jorgensen said.

*The DuPage County Health Department was awarded a Comprehensive Opioid Abuse Site-Based Program (COAP) grant in the amount of \$1,164,298 from the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance for the project period of January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2022. Project evaluation for each component will be provided by the Illinois Justice Information Authority.*

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