

Mayor's Update



The Massachusetts Department of Public Health recently released the most current data on the opioid epidemic, and overdose deaths in Newton went from 16 in 2016, to 9 in 2017.

That is still nine tragedies too many, and it shows Newton residents are not immune to the issues facing cities and towns across our country. We're working hard on the problem though, and together we're adding social workers, creating new programming through Newton PATH (Prevention, Awareness, Treatment and Hope), and finding ways to help our residents touched by this epidemic.

Just last week the Newton Police Department received two opioid overdose calls. In one case a man in his seventies was saved with a dose of Naloxone (Narcan), an antidote to opioids which are narcotics that includes prescription drugs such as codeine, oxycodone and fentanyl, as well as heroin. In the second case, another man, also in his seventies, was found too late to be saved.

The Newton PATH initiative, begun in 2015, combines health and public safety initiatives to offer hope to those who are struggling.

This summer PATH is launching a program to train residents who are worried about someone in their life on how to dispense Narcan. The program will also provide free Narcan kits for emergency use in case of an overdose. The training will be coupled with discussions with a social worker to help steer people toward long term recovery while providing the potentially life-saving drug in case of emergency. Newton's emergency responders also carry the life-saving antidote.

In addition, Newton PATH's "Clean Out Your Medicine Cabinet" campaign has begun, urging people to dispose of their unused prescription drugs properly, so drugs are not left where they could be taken by people they were not prescribed to.

Bring your unused prescription drugs to either of the two medicine disposal kiosks which are located in Newton year-round at the Newton Police Department Headquarters (1321 Washington Street in West Newton Square), and at Newton-Wellesley Hospital (2014 Washington Street).

Want more information about Newton PATH? Go to the City website at newtonma.gov/NewtonPATH.

Let's Vote on Retail Marijuana

I've fully supported medical marijuana establishments. They require customers to have prescriptions from a physician to purchase the product, and customers must have a state-issued medical marijuana license to enter the store.

Newton is now considering whether and where to allow adult-use "recreational" marijuana establishments.

In 2016, Newton voters supported the Commonwealth of Massachusetts legalizing adult-use marijuana establishments with 55 percent of the vote. Notably, this ballot question specifically stated that local municipalities retained the right to "adopt reasonable restrictions on the time, place and manner of operating marijuana businesses and to limit the number of marijuana establishments in their communities." Having the voters of Newton decide on an outright ban or limit on the number of establishments to be allowed is appropriate, as this is an important and potentially long lasting decision.

I'm comfortable with the City Council voting to put this question on the ballot in November and having all of us together, as a community, deciding the question of whether to permit adult-use "recreational" marijuana stores here in Newton.

(Photo: Happy Pride! Courtesy of Getty Images)

Flag Day

Celebrate Flag Day on Thursday (June 14) as we stand on the steps of City Hall in front of the War Memorial to Pledge Allegiance to our Flag in a ceremony starting at 6:00 p.m..

We will pledge allegiance to our great nation, a nation committed to liberty and to justice for all of us.



What's on Your Mind?

I'm continuing my City Hall open office hours. Come on over and let me know what's on your mind.

All the summer office hours are in my office on the second floor of City Hall. The next one is scheduled for this Friday, June 15, from 8:30 to 10:00 a.m. A full schedule is online at newtonma.gov.

I'll also be going to a lot of concerts, recreational activities, programs, and events throughout the city all summer. Got an event you'd like me to attend? Contact Dana Hanson at 617-796-1104 or dhanson@newtonma.gov, and we'll see if I can join you.



We Have a Winner!

Did anyone make it to City Hall last week to sample the amazing sweets on the Mayor's First Annual Treat Contest table outside my office?

Bakers from 14 different City Departments brought their cookies, bars and cakes in to be judged by our five "official" judges (and 250 people who cast votes for their favorites).

Congratulations to Noah Rivkin (the Mayor's Executive Aide), Karen Glasgow (Director of Human Resources), and the grand prize winner Alexandra McAndrew (Human Resources Department) who won for hybrid cookie/pie/fruit bar frizza. The frizza recipe is posted online on the Mayor's page at newtonma.gov/recipe.

(Photo: Firefighter and Union President Marc Rizza, his son, Sam Rizza. Sam played Taps at the Fire Department Memorial Sunday.)

Warmly,

Ruthanne

P.S. - Help fight hunger with our Newton Firefighters who are holding a food drive on behalf of the three Newton food pantries through Friday, June 22. Firefighters are asking for your

donations at all the Newton fire stations to help stock the pantry's shelves over the summer. Please donate canned or packaged non-perishable food items that have not been opened or expired, and/or toiletries in standard sizes. Thank you!

