



## News

# NSMC, NONPROFIT JOIN TO HELP OVERDOSE VICTIMS

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LYNN — A local nonprofit is teaming with North Shore Medical Center to provide recovery coaches for every person treated for an overdose in Union Hospital’s emergency room.

Bridgewell, a Peabody-based nonprofit with extensive experience in providing treatment and housing for people recovering from substance use disorders, now offers 24/7 emergency response services by trained recovery coaches. All recovery coaches have personally overcome their own addictions and can relate firsthand to those struggling after an overdose, according to a press release from North Shore Medical Center. NSMC, which operates emergency rooms in Salem and Lynn, is the largest medical provider on the North Shore.

“We know from our experience that individuals with substance use disorders respond to recovery coaches who understand their experience and can provide unconditional support and guidance,” said Mark Kennard, director of community services at Bridgewell.

As a society, Kennard said we can no longer enable overdose victims to simply walk out of the emergency room without any support.

“We feel fortunate to partner with Bridgewell in this challenging work, and believe that the experience and dedication of the coaches will enhance the lives of our patients in ways that complement the expertise and efforts of our Emergency Department staff,” said Jane Clarke, R.N. and executive director of emergency services at NSMC.

The recovery coach program at NSMC began in late March and has already assisted more than 20 people and their family members, including some who entered recovery programs as a direct result of this intervention in the emergency room. According to police records, a total of 439 opioid-related overdoses occurred in Lynn last year, an increase from 349 in 2015.

As part of this program, Bridgewell has hired six recovery coaches who are available to NSMC Union Hospital staff to call as soon as an overdose case appears at the hospital.

Once contacted by NSMC, the coaches come to the hospital right away to establish a relationship with the overdose patient and begin discussions about options for treatment. All recovery coaches have completed a newly implemented state certification and training process.

While initially available only in Lynn, the hope is to expand the recovery coach program to Salem Hospital later this year.