



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

Chesterfield County, Virginia

Karl S. Leonard, Sheriff



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For immediate release

CHESTERFIELD COUNTY HARP PROGRAM IS ESSENTIAL IN REDUCING RECIDIVISM ACCORDING TO INDEPENDENT STUDY

~ Sheriff's HARP Program is Making a Difference in the Community ~

CHESTERFIELD COUNTY, VA – An independent study conducted by Virginia Commonwealth University L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs has determined the Helping Addicts Recover Progressively Program, formerly known as the Heroin Addiction Recovery program or HARP, is an effective and essential program in helping to save lives and reduce recidivism.

The program final evaluation report was issued Aug. 27. The study included a 15-month evaluation from Jan. 2018 – May 2019, of four aspects of HARP; perspectives of internal and external stakeholders regarding HARP programming and expectations; impacts of the recovery process on program participants and family members, risk factors associated with opioid overdoses; and criminal history post release from HARP.

"I'm pleased with the results of this study," said Chesterfield County's Sheriff Karl Leonard. Based on an in-depth examination of data by an independent group at VCU, this study now provides our first quantitative glimpse of the effectiveness of HARP. The report supports our belief that HARP was and is a very essential program that is saving lives, reducing recidivism and making a real difference in our community."

According to the report, crime and arrest data indicate HARP graduates recidivate at a lower level than non-HARP graduates. The data shows a positive impact on individuals and the community from participating in the HARP program.

More than 900 addicts seeking help with recovery have participated in the Chesterfield County Sheriff's 3-year old HARP program. The study looked at data from early in the program's existence.

“It validates what we are seeing. HARP is saving lives, changing lives, repairing lives, and preparing lives,” Leonard said. “Even if only one life was saved the program would have been worth it, but we know hundreds have been saved.”

The Chesterfield County Sheriff’s Office has seen a continual decrease in the number of inmates they house over the last few years with the implementation of additional training and development programs.

Leonard said, “HARP, along with many of the other rehabilitative programs conducted throughout the jail for all inmates, are helping us slow down the revolving door of recidivism. We are now seeing many people leave jail and become productive members of our society and live full lives in recovery as the men and women they strive to be, the sons and daughters they want to be, and especially the mothers and fathers they can be.”

The final report can be accessed online at:

<https://www.chesterfield.gov/DocumentCenter/View/12060/HARP-FINAL-Evaluation-Report-2019>

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