



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Granite Health Communications
603-415-1300

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**Granite Health Receives Grant from Tufts Health Freedom Plan and
Northeast Delta Dental to Combat New Hampshire's Drug Crisis**

CONCORD, N.H. – On Wednesday, Granite Health announced the organization has been awarded a substantial grant from Tufts Health Freedom Plan and Northeast Delta Dental to implement efforts aimed at preventing addiction and combating New Hampshire's opioid crisis by reducing excess prescription opioids.

Picking up on the important work by Jim and Jeanne Moser and their Zero Left Campaign to combat New Hampshire's drug crisis, Catholic Medical Center, Exeter Health Resources, LRGHealthcare, Southern New Hampshire Health, and Wentworth-Douglass Hospital will implement multiple initiatives throughout this year to reduce excess prescription opioids in New Hampshire. Zero Left's approach is to stop addiction before it starts. With a focus on addiction prevention, the initiatives come on the heels of the state's most successful drug takeback day and the recent discovery of carfentanil's presence in New Hampshire communities.

The grant will fund three components of Granite Health's initiative to reduce excess prescription opioids, including:

Takeback Boxes: Granite Health will install takeback boxes at three of its member's facilities for people to dispose of excess or expired opioids. The boxes will be located at Catholic Medical Center in Manchester, LRGHealthcare in Laconia, and Wentworth-Douglass Hospital in Dover. The takeback boxes will make it easy for people to dispose of their unused opioids that are prescribed by a doctor or dentist.

"Many people save excess pain pills 'just in case' they need them but what they don't realize is that having prescription pain pills around the house can pose a very real risk for addiction," said Travis Harker, MD, Chief Medical Officer at Granite Health. Adding, "Four out of five people who use heroin or fentanyl begin their addiction with prescription opioids from a legitimate prescription or from a friend who had left over pain pills. Getting rid of any excess opioids is an important step in preventing addiction."

Deterra Deactivation Pouches: Participating members of Granite Health have committed to distributing 15,000 drug deactivation pouches, which neutralize the active ingredients in opioids for safe in-home disposal of excess or expired medication. The pouches will be distributed by physicians following surgery. Handing patients deactivation pouches alongside their opioid prescription upon surgical discharge and discussing an appropriate pain management plan, including how to dispose of the excess pills, will help patients better understand the dangers of misusing and storing excess medication.

Provider Education: Grant funding will provide specialized education and training on appropriate prescribing to medical providers and dentists. Following new rules adopted by the Boards of Medicine, Nursing, and Dentistry mandated by the legislature last session, the education program will fulfill requirements for physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and dentists to safely prescribe opioids. Further, the education will be customized for post-surgical vs. chronic pain prescribing which is important because safe and appropriate prescribing is different for acute and chronic pain.

The Moser's lost their son, Adam to an overdose in 2015 and founded the Zero Left Campaign. Jim is a surgical technician at Exeter Health Resources, a Granite Health member, and has made it his mission to raise awareness of the dangers of prescription opioids. "The purpose of the Zero Left Campaign has been to help people understand the dangers of prescription opioids and ensure there are 'zero left' in the medicine cabinet following a prescription cycle," said Moser. "We are very pleased to have healthcare organizations at Granite Health make important commitments aimed at preventing misuse of opioids."

Tom Raffio is the President & CEO of Northeast Delta Dental, the region's most trusted name in dental benefits. He says, "With the continued severity of New Hampshire's opioid crisis, Northeast Delta Dental is proud to partner with Granite Health and its members to prevent misuse of prescription opioids. We know that opioid misuse has oral and overall health implications and Northeast Delta Dental will work with Granite Health to increase awareness of this important health issue while providing resources for the public and medical and dental professionals."

Brian Wells is the President of Tufts Health Freedom Plan, a newly established health insurance company in New Hampshire. He says, "It is our job not only as an insurer, but as a company with strong roots in the community to do whatever we can to help prevent medication from ever being misused. The opioid epidemic is ravaging our community, and we must come together to do whatever we can to prevent overdoses before they happen."

The grant is funded by contributions from Tufts Health Freedom Plan and Northeast Delta Dental, who each share a relationship with Granite Health. The components of Granite Health's initiative will be progressively rolled out over the course of this year.

About Granite Health

Granite Health was formed in 2011 and is a partnership of six independent New Hampshire health systems dedicated to leading the transformation of healthcare delivery in the communities they serve. Catholic Medical Center, Concord Hospital, Exeter Health Resources, LRGHealthcare, Southern New Hampshire Health, and Wentworth-Douglass Hospital are committed to sharing resources to provide better, more seamless, and affordable care to their patients.

About Zero Left

The Zero Left Campaign was founded by Jim and Jeanne Moser who tragically lost their son Adam to an overdose in 2015. Zero Left is a public service campaign designed to educate the public on the potential hazards of opioids and the need to remove excess opioids from the community.

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