

**News Release from
The Honorable Sandra Doorley
Monroe County District Attorney**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**MONROE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY SANDRA DOORLEY,
THE ROCHESTER POLICE DEPARTMENT AND THE MONROE
COUNTY SHERIFF ROLL-OUT 'PROJECT HOPE'**

District Attorney and Law Enforcement Partners Presents Project Heroin Overdose Prevention & Education to Redirect Low-Level Drug Offenders to Health and Treatment Centers

Rochester, NY – Monday, January 28, Monroe County District Attorney Sandra Doorley shared details of Project Heroin Overdose Prevention & Education (Project HOPE) a law enforcement program created to redirect low-level drug offenders to health and treatment centers instead of Monroe County Courts and the Monroe County Jail.

In conjunction with the Monroe County Public Defender's Office, the Rochester Police Department, the Monroe County Sheriff's Office, Delphi Rise Open Access Clinic and Huther Doyle, Project HOPE was modeled after a similar program in Staten Island and is a post-arrest, pre-arraignment program for low-level drug offenders. If an officer comes across an individual who meets the Project Hope criteria, they have the option and discretion to offer Project HOPE. The eligibility criteria includes: a top charge of Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the 7th Degree (a class A misdemeanor), the case cannot involve any type of sale, the case cannot involve allegations of domestic violence, the client cannot have a felony conviction, the client cannot have a misdemeanor history involving violence, the client cannot be subject to probation or parole, the client cannot have a bench warrant history, the client cannot have pending charges and the client must be reachable by telephone or text message.

"At the Monroe County District Attorney's Office in conjunction with the Rochester Police Department and the Monroe County Sheriff's Office, we are not interested in prosecuting victims of addiction, but sending them to a successful and realistic recovery plan," said Monroe County District Attorney Sandra Doorley, *"Over the past year, the Monroe County Heroin Task Force has begun to succeed in our mission to prosecute drug-dealers for drug sale and homicides, while Project HOPE can assist in aiding those who need a helping-hand. We know that the road to recovery is difficult and nearly impossible to do alone. Project HOPE helps us to complete our promise to provide recovery services during this epidemic."*

“District Attorney Doorley is to be commended for her initiative in seeking to offer low-level offenders a chance at recovery instead of a criminal conviction,” said Public Defender Timothy Donaher. *“Our community has seen a shocking number of deaths due to opioid addiction. Project HOPE will save lives, and by addressing offenders’ addiction issues it will lessen crime. The citizens of Monroe County are well-served by DA Doorley’s, Sheriff Baxter’s, and Chief Simmons’ efforts to address the opioid crisis with compassion, while always being cognizant of the need to ensure public safety in our community.”*

At the scene of the possession crime, the arresting officer will obtain a valid telephone number and provide basic information on Project HOPE. If the individual is willing to abide by Project HOPE regulations, the officer will issue an appearance ticket to appear to court within seven days and will bring the individual directly to the Delphi Rise Open Access Clinic. Once transported to the clinic, the individual will be introduced to a peer advocate, who will help coordinate with a service provider.

“District Attorney Sandra Doorley and I had the pleasure to tour Project HOPE in Staten Island, N.Y.,” said Sheriff Todd K. Baxter. *“After getting an in-depth look and understanding of the program and the impact it is having on that community, it became clear that Project HOPE indeed compliments the efforts of the Monroe County Heroin Task Force. We have always believed intense enforcement, education and recovery are critical components to the opioid epidemic solution, and must work hand in hand to be successful. Project HOPE allows us to provide exactly that, hope, to an addict’s life and treatment options as an individual faces the possibility of entering the criminal justice system and incarceration. We are excited to offer this intervention in hopes of steering addicts on the path to recovery; changing lives.”*

“I would like to thank Monroe County District Attorney Sandra Doorley for partnering with the Rochester Police Department in the Project HOPE program,” said Rochester Police Chief Mark Simmons, *“Implementing a program like Project HOPE will allow offenders that are suffering from addiction to receive the treatment that they need.”*

Also a part of Project HOPE is the Monroe County District Attorney HOPE Director, who will coordinate with the Public Defender’s Office and the service provider. If the individual successfully completes the Project HOPE guidelines and is determined to have meaningfully engaged in the program within thirty-seven days with approval from the MCDA HOPE Director and the Service Provider, the Monroe County District Attorney’s Office will decline to prosecute the case and the client will have no criminal record as it pertains to the arrest.

“While we still have a long way to go to turn the corner on the Opiate Epidemic, Project Hope adds an important tool to help us build a community solution, and to treat this as a true public health issue,” said Carl Hatch-Feir, President & CEO of Delphi Rise. *“Many of my colleagues around the State are jealous of the kind of commitment and cooperation evidenced by the criminal justice partners in this project. The program targets one of the most vulnerable populations and offers them support, instead of judgement, and immediate access to the services they need.”*

“Huther Doyle is honored to work with Monroe County District Attorney Sandra Doorley on Project Hope, a promising program that recognizes that addiction is often at the core of criminal activity,” said Kelly Reed, President & CEO of Huther Doyle. *“Addressing addiction, particularly at its earliest stages, can change the trajectory of a person’s life. We commend District Attorney Sandra Doorley for recognizing this and being a champion in this creative response to both crime and addiction in our community.”*

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