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CRIMINAL JUSTICE INSTITUTE

Funding from Blue & You Foundation for a Healthier Arkansas Continues to Expand Availability and Usage of Naloxone to Reduce Overdose Deaths in the State

February 21, 2019, Little Rock, AR— Through a \$150,000 grant provided by the Blue & You Foundation for a Healthier Arkansas, efforts are underway at the Criminal Justice Institute (CJI) to continue expanding the availability and usage of naloxone by providing kits containing this lifesaving drug to 1,390 Arkansas first responders. Naloxone is a nasal spray that can reverse an opioid drug overdose if administered in time and followed up appropriately.

A ceremonial check presentation will be held on Friday, February 22, 2019, at 1:30 p.m. at the Criminal Justice Institute, located at 26 Corporate Hill Drive in Little Rock.

At 1:30 p.m., Curtis Barnett, President and CEO of Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield, and Patrick O’Sullivan, Executive Director of the Blue & You Foundation for a Healthier Arkansas, will be on hand to present a ceremonial check to Dr. Cheryl May, Director of the Criminal Justice Institute. The president of the University of Arkansas System and the State Drug Director will also be in attendance.

Through this grant program, at least thirty-five (35) municipal, campus, county and state law enforcement and first responder agencies will receive naloxone kits. Each kit consists of two 4mg doses of naloxone, nitrile gloves, a CPR face shield, hand sanitizer, drug treatment information, and a carrier. Equipped with these kits, law enforcement and other first responders can more effectively respond to opioid overdoses, potentially preventing overdose deaths.

Prior to receiving naloxone kits, participating agencies must execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a medical director in their community and implement a model department policy regarding naloxone administration. Each first responder receiving a naloxone kit must also complete a two-hour online training through the Criminal Justice Institute demonstrating the proper use of naloxone.



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This grant program will expand the number of first responders capable of saving a life with naloxone. Currently, more than 200 lives have been saved in Arkansas with the administration of this nasal spray.

“Thousands of Arkansans have been affected by opioid addiction but those numbers don’t begin to tell the story of the devastation this crisis has had on the lives of real people and real families,” said Curtis Barnett. “At Arkansas Blue Cross, we believe it’s important to connect people to treatment and resources to help fight opioid abuse, and an important part of that work is to make naloxone more accessible. The Blue & You Foundation for a Healthier Arkansas is proud once again to support the University of Arkansas Criminal Justice Institute and state drug director Kirk Lane as we expand the availability of naloxone kits to even more of our local law enforcement agencies to help them to continue to save lives.”

“We are so grateful to the Blue & You Foundation for a Healthier Arkansas for their continued investment in this program,” said Dr. Cheryl May. “Too many families in Arkansas have experienced the loss of a loved one due to an opioid overdose. By equipping first responders with naloxone, additional lives can be saved and families can be spared this loss.”

“Through the efforts of the Blue & You Foundation, Criminal Justice Institute, and other partnerships, many lives will be saved throughout the state,” said Arkansas Drug Director Kirk Lane. “It is important to understand that when a life is saved by the use of a Naloxone kit – If they are alive, there is a chance of recovery. We have met several of these saved individuals, and members of their family, and found that they are now in the process of going through recovery treatment because of these events.”

For more information, contact:

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ABOUT THE BLUE & YOU FOUNDATION

Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield established the Blue & You Foundation in 2001 as a charitable foundation to promote better health in Arkansas. The Blue & You Foundation awards grants annually to non-profit or governmental organizations and programs that positively affect the health of Arkansans. In its 17 years of operation, the Blue & You Foundation has awarded more than \$33 million to 1,566 health improvement programs in Arkansas.

ABOUT THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE INSTITUTE

The Criminal Justice Institute (CJI) is a division of the University of Arkansas System that provides programs and services designed to enhance proficiency and professionalism within the Arkansas law enforcement community. CJI delivers advanced training in progressive areas of criminal justice, including law enforcement leadership and management, forensic sciences, computer technologies, illicit drug investigations, and school, traffic, and officer safety. By providing these services, CJI assists law enforcement agencies in positively impacting not only public safety, but also the economic viability of communities across the State.