



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nashua, N.H. March 28, 2016

**Photo caption (attached)** – Distinguished panelists from New Hampshire medical, recovery, and law enforcement communities addressed the opioid epidemic at a public forum held at Rivier University on March 28. From left to right: Karyn Madore, Donna Marston, Officer Eric Adams, Captain David Bailey, Amber Fox McNeil, and Annette Escalante

### Opioioid education event at Rivier advances dialogue within New Hampshire

In response to rising opioioid abuse in New Hampshire, Rivier University hosted an AnyOne.AnyTime.NH community event on March 28. Created by the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, the goal of the program is to educate the public and professionals about addiction, emergency overdose medications, and support services for anyone experiencing opioioid addiction. The program addressed misuse of heroin, street fentanyl, other illicit opioioids, and prescription drugs.

Mayor Jim Donchess addressed the gathering on behalf of the city of Nashua, thanking Rivier for sponsoring the event and furthering the conversation to identify and affect solutions. Representatives from the offices of Senator Jeanne Shaheen, Senator Kelly Ayotte, and Congresswoman Annie Kuster attended the event.

In a written statement, Governor Hassan offered, “Combating this crisis is an ‘all-hands-on-deck’ moment for our state ... Tonight’s gathering represents the spirit of collective problem solving that is necessary to stem – and reverse – the tide of this horrible epidemic, building on our efforts to educate our fellow Granite Staters about the dangers of addiction and to raise awareness about support services available for those suffering from addiction.”

The program featured a panel discussion with members of law enforcement, the recovery community, and the medical community. Karyn Madore, M.Ed., Operations Director and a Senior Consultant with the Community Health Institute, New Hampshire’s Public Health Institute, and an adjunct professor at Rivier University, moderated the discussion. Panelists included Certified Recovery Coach and member of the Governor’s Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse: Recovery Task Force, Donna Marston; Police Officer Eric Adams, Laconia Drug Prevention, Enforcement and Treatment Coordinator; Amber Fox McNeil, RN, BSN, a member of the Harbor Homes medical team; Keystone Hall (formerly known as the Greater Nashua Council on Alcoholism) Vice President Annette Escalante, MSW, MLADC; and Nashua Police Captain David Bailey.

Nearly 100 attendees questioned panel members on the range and availability of treatment and recovery programs in New Hampshire; emergency team response and the use of Narcan, an opioioid antidote, for temporary reversal of opioioid overdoses; Narcan administration in school settings, pending



legislation aimed at stemming the crisis; special treatments for pregnant opioid users and their unborn infants; and expanding the pool of doctors and other personnel certified to treat people struggling with substance abuse.

Responding to a question of what can be done now, in 2016, to impact the crisis, panelists suggested:

- Greater understanding and kinder language for those with Substance Use Disorder to remove stigmas
- Expansion of Laconia Police Department's Prevention Enforcement Treatment (PET) community outreach program to other New Hampshire cities and towns
- A greater focus on the drug problem than on the individual drugs (pills, heroin, fentanyl, methamphetamine, etc.)
- Funding for prevention and expansion of the workforce (trained doctors and practitioners) and treatment programs
- College and university dual degree programs that provide expanded education on substance abuse
- Alternative therapies for pain management (yoga, acupuncture, physical therapy) rather than opioids

The event was sponsored jointly by Rivier University's Nursing and Social Work programs, the Rivier Task Force on Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs, and the Counseling and Wellness Center.

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Notes to editors:

Founded in 1933 by the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary, Rivier University is a Catholic institution recognized for distinctive academic programs, offering many of the region's leading programs at the undergraduate, graduate, postgraduate, and doctoral levels. With Nashua as our home and the world as our classroom, the Rivier experience ensures that students develop leadership skills as well as an awareness and appreciation of diverse cultures in New England and around the world.