



# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

## Middlesex Sheriff's Office

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## **Sheriff Koutoujian hosts Special Senate Committee on Opioid Addiction Prevention, Treatment and Recovery Options**

BILLERICA, Mass. - Middlesex Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian welcomed members of the Special Senate Committee on Opioid Addiction Prevention, Treatment and Recovery Options for a tour and discussion of addiction treatment programming at the Middlesex House of Correction and Jail on Thursday, April 2.

"I want to thank Chairwoman Jennifer Flanagan, the members of the committee and their staffs for meeting with our team to discuss our role in addressing the opioid epidemic ravaging the Commonwealth. There is no greater issue facing us right now," said Sheriff Koutoujian. "At the Middlesex Sheriff's Office (MSO) we work every day to assist the men in our custody overcome their addictions and return to the community healthier and better prepared to reintegrate back into their communities."

During the first two months of 2015, 45.6 percent of all men receiving a medical intake screening at the Middlesex Sheriff's Office were identified by medical staff as needing detoxification for opioids, or a combination of drugs which included opioids. These numbers are in line with 2014 data, which showed 50 percent of sentenced inmates who went through the MSO's Accountability Recovery Community (A.R.C.) drug treatment program identified as being addicted to opioids.

"The opioid epidemic affecting our community is prevalent among all populations, and that certainly does not exclude those who are incarcerated," said Senator Flanagan. "The hope is that as we address opioid addiction everywhere, it will subsequently reflect our judicial system by not only decreasing the number of criminals addicted, but also reduce the number of criminals in general."

As part of today's visit, committee members and staff met with MSO addiction treatment and medical staff, toured various areas of the facility and received a briefing from Sheriff Koutoujian on substance abuse and re-entry programming. The Sheriff also discussed the importance of health insurance and access to treatment and counseling services for individuals post-release.

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