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Local Leaders Gather at Touro University California to Discuss Drug Epidemic

Leaders celebrated the one-year anniversary of the Drug Safe Solano Coalition while discussing various actions taken to address the opioid epidemic

Vallejo, CA (October 17, 2019): Congressman Mike Thompson (D-Napa/Solano) was the keynote speaker at a gathering of Napa and Solano County health officials held on October 8 at Touro University California. The occasion was a celebration of the one-year anniversary of the formation of Drug Safe Solano, a coalition of stakeholders concerned about the opioid epidemic in our area. Congressman Thompson spoke of actions taken by Congress to address the wave of over 70,000 opioid overdose deaths across the U.S. in 2017, a number up by over 9% from 2016. The coalition's effort was recognized with a Congressional commendation and resolution of commendation by the California State Senate.

Solano County Supervisor Erin Hannigan (D-Vallejo) spoke of her experiences in Vallejo and expressed her support for the coalition's efforts to reach out to those affected by substance use disorders and to destigmatize the diagnosis and treatment of opioid dependency. The Solano County Board of Supervisors has recently approved a program for the treatment of opioid withdrawal for those in custody.

Vallejo Mayor Bob Sampayan told of his experience of finding a young opioid overdose victim dead at the wheel of his vehicle while serving as a law enforcement officer.

Solano County Undersheriff Brad DeWall spoke of the success of the deployment of the opioid overdose rescue drug Naloxone with the Sheriff's patrol and custody divisions. Since this program began last year over a dozen lives have been saved by Solano County Law Enforcement agencies.

Doctors Christine Wu of Solano County Public Health, Ann Finkelstein of LaClinica, Christina Kinnevey of Touro University California brought their patients who have successfully been treated for opioid dependency to tell their stories. This was a moving experience which brought the audience of nearly 100 to their feet in appreciation.

The evening was closed by Dr. Richard Barry, Chairman of the Solano County Alcohol and Drug Advisory Board. Dr. Barry emphasized that although the coalition has been successful in saving dozens of lives and enabled scores of those ensnared in substance dependency to have access to treatment, this is only the beginning of our efforts to create a more Drug Safe Solano.

About the Touro College and University System: Touro University California is a Jewish nonprofit, independent graduate institution of higher learning founded in 1997 on three Judaic values: social justice, the pursuit of knowledge and service to humanity. The University, home to 1,400 students, has professional programs in osteopathic medicine, pharmacy, physician assistant studies, public health, nursing, and education. Faculty, staff and students have a powerful commitment to academic excellence, evidence-based professional practice, inter-professional collaboration, and active engagement with a global community. To learn more, visit www.tu.edu or call 707-638-5200.

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