

Press Release

May 25, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Dr. Sharon Harris

516- 676-2008

safeglencove@yahoo.com

### **SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: COVID-19 Changes Addiction Medicine**

Individuals have an easier time than ever accessing addiction care, thanks to aggressive government reforms in response to the pandemic. According to The Washington Post, since March, federal officials have made efforts to reform addiction medicine in the U.S. than they had in the two decades prior by expanding access to some treatments far more quickly and thoroughly than any of the legislative reforms Congress passed even at the height of the opioid epidemic. Now due to COVID-19, Doctors wield unprecedented freedom to prescribe addiction drugs by telemedicine and evaluate patients by phone and many doctors and advocates say that they are unwilling to relinquish that flexibility without a fight. Currently, there is a burgeoning movement to keep many of the new policies in place permanently. Many treatment providers across the U.S. have said publicly that the new status quo represents long-sought change that could positively transform patient care for decades to come.

At first, as Covid-19 spread across the United States, addiction doctors and policy experts feared the worst. Between the stress, isolation, and financial hardship the pandemic has left in its wake, many assumed it would wreak particular devastation on the roughly half-million Americans with opioid addiction. One analysis published last week by the Well Being Trust, a public health group, projected that 75,000 Americans would die from suicide and overdose as a result of the pandemic.

The logistics of addiction treatment also became more complicated. Many clinics that provided syringe exchange services or walk-in addiction treatment closed, or reduced their hours, sparking concerns that rates of overdose, or transmission of HIV or hepatitis C, would spike. Others worried that some of the 30 million Americans who have filed new unemployment claims since the pandemic began might lose their insurance and their ability to pay for care.

Even in the face of tragedy, however, the coronavirus has created and facilitated an atmosphere for policies that many addiction treatment advocates have been pushing for years.

The Washington Post is a major American daily newspaper published in Washington, D.C that provides breaking news and analysis on politics, business, world national news and entertainment. For more information please visit [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com).

The SAFE Glen Cove Coalition is conducting an opioid prevention awareness campaign entitled. "Keeping Glen Cove SAFE," in order to educate and update the community regarding opioid use and its consequences. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on [www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition](https://www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition), visit SAFE's website to learn more about the Opioid Epidemic and COVID-19 at [www.safeglencove.org](http://www.safeglencove.org).