



# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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## Press Release

### DA Morrissey, MIAA remove Barrier for athletes to get help

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Norfolk DA Michael Morrissey has worked with the MIAA to eliminate a substantial barrier between high school athletes who are struggling with substance use and the help they need.

"We know from our investigations of overdose deaths in Norfolk County that many of those dying today got hooked on opiate pain pills years earlier – often following high school sports injuries," District Attorney Michael W. Morrissey said. "Until now, a student would face suspension from any team they were on if they came forward to ask for help."

As part of his work with local high schools to screen high school students for possible problems with opiates, District Attorney Morrissey petitioned the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association to change its substance abuse rules in May of 2014. The change has now taken effect, and Page 61 now reads: "Prior to any chemical health violation a student's request for and enrollment in a substance abuse treatment shall not in and of itself constitute a violation of the chemical health/alcohol/drugs/tobacco Rule 62."

Morrissey also provided Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) training to 80 school nurses, athletic trainers and athletic directors from across the county at a December 16, 2015 seminar in Canton. That event gained publicity because it also included training on the administration of the overdose reversal drug naloxone.

"It is important as a state, and as individual communities, that we concentrate not only on the crime and death associated with full blown addiction, but also that we put thinking and resources into preventing addictions from taking root," DA Morrissey said. "This change to the MIAA's rules erases another barrier between young people and getting help."

See also:

[http://www.mass.gov/da/norfolk/Press\\_Releases/12-16-15\\_School%20nurses%20train%20in%20opiate%20screening%20and%20overdose%20reversal.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/da/norfolk/Press_Releases/12-16-15_School%20nurses%20train%20in%20opiate%20screening%20and%20overdose%20reversal.pdf)

And, at P.61:

[http://www.miaa.net/gen/miaa\\_generated\\_bin/documents/basic\\_module/MIAAHandbook1517.pdf](http://www.miaa.net/gen/miaa_generated_bin/documents/basic_module/MIAAHandbook1517.pdf)