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| |  | | --- | | cid:image001.jpg@01D004D2.75FB4870 | | **Rhode Island’s Core VIPP Program Grows Staff and Partnerships to Curb the Epidemic of Prescription Drug Overdose**  Serving as Rhode Island’s Unintentional Injury Prevention Coordinator on the Core Violence and Injury Prevention Program (Core VIPP) team for the past four years has prepared Jenn Koziol for her new role as Program Manager for Rhode Island’s CDC PDO - Prevention for States Cooperative Agreement, a role she accepted in January.  C:\Users\mlr6\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.Outlook\NQ6VGC9K\Jenn Koziol.pngMs. Koziol attributes her experience working with the Core VIPP program as critical for allowing her to take this next step in her career, “As part of the Core VIPP program’s efforts to update our Injury Plan, we identified prescription drug overdose as one of Rhode Island’s four priority areas. This led to formation of [the Drug Overdose Prevention and Rescue Coalition (DOPRC](https://www.rimed.org/rimedicaljournal/2014/10/2014-10-34-dadt-bowman.pdf)) and laid the groundwork for us to build relationships and infrastructure with our partners.” According to Koziol, “The ground work helped put us in a good position to develop a well thought out proposal when the PfS funding became available.”  The DOPRC will be critical in implementing the activities of PfS and Ms. Koziol will continue her relationship with them in her new position by convening and facilitating its four workgroups. Her position also includes direct oversight and overall responsibility for carrying out the non-data related activities of the project, including supervision of a Project Coordinator and Project Evaluator/Epidemiologist, and serving as a liaison for drug overdose prevention to other state agencies, partners and initiatives.  Nobody could be happier for Ms. Koziol than her former supervisor, Ms. Beatriz Perez, Program Manager for Rhode Island’sCore VIPP. Ms. Perez believes that the experiences Ms. Koziol received while working with the Core VIPP program helped prepare her for her new role. “Jenn was new to injury prevention when she began working with me on the Core VIPP as the Unintentional Injury Prevention Project Coordinator, says Ms. Perez. “The experience she received in program planning and implementation, and, working with the RI Injury Community Planning Group to revise the state injury prevention plan helped prepare her to take the next step in her career.” Ms. Perez also highlights Ms. Koziol’s strong interpersonal and management skills as well as a solid knowledge of public health as important factors in her success. Of Ms. Koziol’s abilities she said, “Jenn developed strong relationships with key leaders in our state.  Those relationships with public and private partners in research, healthcare, grassroots advocacy, and law enforcement, to name a few, blossomed into what is now Rhode Island's drug overdose prevention program. The new Prescription Drug Overdose Prevention proposal reflects the strength of the Drug Overdose Prevention and Rescue Coalition and its many workgroups that Jenn has provided leadership to over the last three years.  To date, much of the drug overdose prevention work has been done with in-kind partner support thanks to Jenn's persistence.”  Both Ms. Koziol and Ms. Perez are looking forward to making an impact on the prescription drug overdose epidemic in their state. Rhode Island currently ranks in the top 10 for PDO deaths across the nation. Ms. Koziol says she is looking forward to making a difference in this important public health issue that is affecting so many people in Rhode Island. Ms. Perez echoes these sentiments, “I look forward to improvements in the areas of partnerships, policy, recovery, and data that will ultimately lead to a reduction in drug overdoses in Rhode Island. I am thankful to CDC for providing the opportunity to increase Rhode Island's resources to curb our prescription drug overdose epidemic.  This would not have been possible without the core violence and injury prevention infrastructure built over the last thirteen years through the CDC Core VIPP program.” | |  | | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention · 1600 Clifton Road, Atlanta, GA 30333 · 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636) | |