



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
February 5, 2026

Contact: Anna Youngmann
Phone: (413) 664-5605

Email: ayoungmann@berkshireplanning.org

Into Light Project Comes to the Berkshires to Reduce Opioid Stigma and Honor Lives Lost

North Adams, MA -- The Berkshire Overdose and Addiction Prevention Collaborative (BOAPC) and the North Berkshire HEAL Coalition are proud to invite the community to experience the Into Light Project, a powerful nationwide arts activism initiative arriving in the Berkshires this spring. The exhibition will be on view from March 13 through June 30 at Hotel Downstreet in North Adams.

Into Light works to reduce stigma surrounding the opioid epidemic while bringing vital awareness to the reality of lives lost due to overdose. The installation features ten new portraits of beloved Berkshire County residents, joining additional portraits from across Massachusetts.

The project comes to the Berkshires with three core objectives:

- Reducing stigma related barriers to seeking support
- Educating the community about the opioid epidemic and pathways to recovery
- Sending a message of love and support to all those impacted by substance use disorder

The road to recovery begins with conversation, and Into Light is designed to spark meaningful dialogue. Despite a robust network of services, Berkshire County continues to lead the state in overdose fatalities. Stigma and lack of awareness remain significant barriers preventing individuals from seeking care.

"We are so grateful to Hotel Downstreet and Main Street Hospitality for generously providing their beautiful gallery space," said Dick Alcombright, a leading member of the HEAL Coalition and former mayor of North Adams. "Bringing this installation front and center—right on Main Street and so close to MASS MoCA—places this crucial conversation at the heart of our community. This is about showing support not only for families and friends who have suffered a loss, but also for everyone who is experiencing a loved one struggling with substance use."

Into Light uplifts the stories of individuals with substance use disorder (SUD) in order to eradicate the stigma and shame that prevent so many from seeking support. Addiction is a medical disease that affects the brain and behavior—it is not a choice or personal failing—and treatment is effective and available.

"The power of art and storytelling allows us to change the conversation about addiction and overdose," said Anna Youngmann, North County HEAL Coalition Community Coordinator. "By erasing stigma, we can ensure more people feel empowered to seek the support they

need. This project is a testament to what we can achieve when we unite to reduce the harms of substance use disorder for all of us.”

The Into Light Project comes to the Berkshires through the generous support of lead sponsor Berkshire Health Systems, in collaboration with the Northern Berkshire Opioid Abatement Collaborative—representing Adams, Cheshire, Clarksburg, Florida, New Ashford, North Adams, Savoy, and Williamstown—as well as the HEAL Coalition, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, and North Adams Regional Hospital.

This collaborative effort combines municipal opioid settlement funds from eight partnering municipalities with additional support from the HEAL Coalition and Berkshire Health Systems/North Adams Regional Hospital.

While this initial exhibition will be hosted in North County, BOAPC looks forward to bringing the installation to other locations throughout Berkshire County in the years ahead.

###

About Into Light – Community Engagement and Education: *The Into Light installation will be accompanied by ongoing educational sessions with medical providers and community members, as well as a series of facilitated community conversations and forums. Organizations or groups interested in hosting a curated forum in the space are encouraged to contact Anna Youngman at ayoungmann@berkshireplanning.org.*

About Berkshire Overdose and Addiction Prevention Collaborative (BOAPC): *Berkshire Overdose and Addiction Prevention Collaborative, a project of Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, implements local policy, practice, systems, and/or environmental changes to prevent the misuse of opioids and to prevent and reduce deaths and poisonings associated with opioids across and throughout the 32 municipalities in Berkshire County.*

About BRPC: *Berkshire Regional Planning Commission is the regional planning agency for Berkshire County, Massachusetts, providing comprehensive planning services to municipalities, which include land use, transportation, community and economic development, housing, public health, and environmental planning. BRPC promotes regional collaboration among communities and works to increase coordination between all levels of government.*