For Immediate Release  
November 4, 2021

For more information, contact:  
Pamela Verklan, Vice President Marketing, Philanthropy and Communications  
774-539-8014  PamelaVerklan@bamsi.org

Local Nonprofit Helps Reduce Opioid Use Related Deaths

Brockton, MA- Last week, the Biden administration announced its plan to curb drug overdoses in the nation, including committing more federal support for harm reduction techniques such as distributing clean syringes and test strips used to check street drugs for hidden fentanyl. BAMSI's COPE Center, which has been providing harm reduction services since 1996 in Brockton, is relieved federal policy is finally catching up to the science.

Harm reduction incorporates a spectrum of strategies designed to keep people who use drugs safe—often meeting users "where they're at" to provide life-saving and evidence-based interventions such as handing out the overdose antidote naloxone, sterile syringes, fentanyl test strips, and testing for the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and Hepatitis C virus.

Last year, more than 9 million Americans misused pain pills, furthering the opioid epidemic. Harm reduction principles are meant to prevent these individuals from dying. As Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra told NPR, "If you can't prevent someone from becoming a user, then at least prevent them from harming themselves to the point of death."

Jesse Pack, Director of HIV Services at BAMSI, says, "COPE builds trust with people who use drugs by meeting them where they are in their journey without judgment. By providing low-barrier services, people get into care and treatment sooner."

Research has shown that syringe services programs reduce HIV prevalence. They also have the potential to connect at-risk populations to needed care. Harm reduction staff build trust over time with the people they support and are in a unique position to encourage them to request treatment, recovery services, and health care.

To learn more about BAMSI's harm reduction services and other public health, behavioral health, and substance use disorder programs, visit BAMSI.org.

About BAMSI:

Founded in 1975, BAMSI is in the business of "bringing people and services together."

BAMSI transforms lives by building the capacity of individuals, families, organizations, and communities to learn, thrive, and achieve their goals.

We have more than 120 locations across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, with diverse services delivered through a growing workforce of more than 2,000 employees.