

# SUMMARY REPORT

**EVENT:** Recovery Talks: Community Listening Forum

**FRIENDS OF  
RECOVERY**  
New York

**ONE COMMUNITY  
ONE VOICE**

**DATE:** 9.21.17

**LOCATION:** Dutchess County Mental Health Center

**ACTIVITY:** Forum for individuals and family members  
on alcoholism/drug addiction

**COORDINATOR:** Allison Weingarten, LMSW, FOR-NY Policy Director

**CONTACT:** 518-487-4395 x22      **LOCAL CONTACT:** Meghan Hetfield

## About Our Event Activity...

### Executive Summary

The Council on Addiction Prevention and Education (CAPE) and Friends of Recovery - Dutchess co-sponsored the FOR-NY Recovery Talks Community Listening Forum. It was the 17th in a series of local forums being held across New York State to provide community members the opportunity to share their personal experiences with legislators, law enforcement and other leaders in dealing with alcohol and drug addiction, the loss of a family member or friend, as well as recovery from addiction.

**Category** Public Policy

**Number of participants** 100

### Purpose

- Provide a safe space for individuals and families in recovery to voice their experiences around addiction, loss and recovery
- Help individuals and families overcome the stigma that prevents many people from seeking help
- Engage the community in a productive discussion with local leaders that allows for more effective policies on addiction/recovery

**Satisfaction Summary** (Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent...)

**Overall ease of event:** 5

**Overall satisfaction with outcome:** 5

**Value to Recovery Community:** 5

**Recommend Repeat of Event (Y/N):** Y

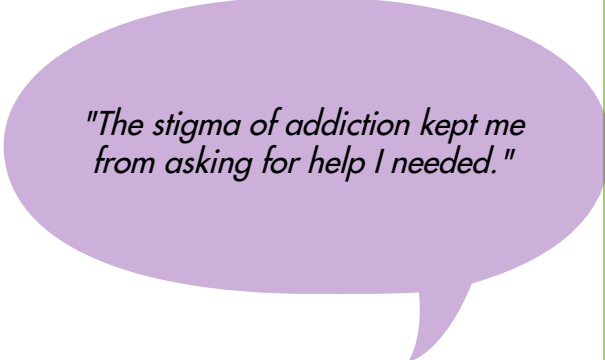
## Highlights

- There was much sadness in the room for those lost and those still struggling but there was also a great feeling of hope in recovery and in the wide array of people coming together from all corners of the community to fight addiction and support recovery.
- The listening panel listened intently to the speakers and after the speakers finished, the listening panel offered some very thoughtful insights and made it clear that they would bring lessons learned back to their practice and use their power to fight the disease of addiction and to support the recovery movement.

## What we Discovered

### Findings

- Two people mentioned challenges with applying for a license in social work and having to document previous judicial convictions and experiences with addictions. These people in recovery asked—“I am not my addiction, that is in my past, why do I still need to be identified in this way?” Others mentioned problems with employment in their recovery process and asked that we advocate for “ban the box.”



*"The stigma of addiction kept me from asking for help I needed."*

- Many speakers spoke of the stigma of addiction keeping them and others from asking for help.
- In Dutchess County, numbers of deaths by opioid overdose are continuing to grow.
- One person mentioned the analogy of a hurricane—the preparedness and response that the community comes together in order to help support those impacted by a hurricane should be applied to the disease of addiction. There is no stigma involved in getting help after a hurricane, there should be no stigma involved in asking for help for an addiction.
- In terms of services, networking is extremely important for service providers. Service providers need to know who each other are so that they can refer those in need to services immediately.
- Aftercare can mean life or death. People leaving treatment need continued services where they are supported and held accountable.
- 12 step works for many, but it is not for everyone. Different services are needed, especially for youth. Programs must be targeted to reach people on their level. Drugs and alcohol can be used as a crutch for people, especially in social situations. Providing social support can help people to rebuild those skills so that they are less dependent on those substances. One respondent mentioned how having a group of people that relied on him helped him to rebuild his self-esteem and self-worth.
- There are huge wait lists for needed treatment programs. One mentioned was a program serving 435 people, with a waiting list of 150.
- One mother discussed her disdain towards the HIPAA rule that prevented her son’s providers from contacting her and updating her on her son’s disease. She believes that if she could have been informed she could have helped to prevent his death from addiction.
- The Chatham Police Department offers volunteer services (with very little funding) in which they do not arrest people who need help but rather work with them until they get the services they need. In the program’s first year of operation, they thought they would get 30 people in need of help, but they got 130. The program offers those in need a meal, a ride, healthcare system navigation support, basic comfort and other supports. This police department believes that we cannot arrest our way out of this epidemic.

## What we Discovered (continued)

- By treating the addiction, other issues that may have been left untreated—in one case that was mentioned, bi-polar disorder—could finally be dealt with and lead to a healthier life.

- Young people need people to empathize with them without enabling them, they need helpers who recognize the signs and symptoms of addiction, people who have walked the walk, an army of angels, dependent and co-dependent supporters who can listen to young people and hold them accountable. This is why recovery high schools and recovery services in high schools are so necessary.

*"Aftercare can mean life or death. People leaving treatment need continued services where they are supported and held accountable."*

*Addiction services and support networks must be centralized and accessible*

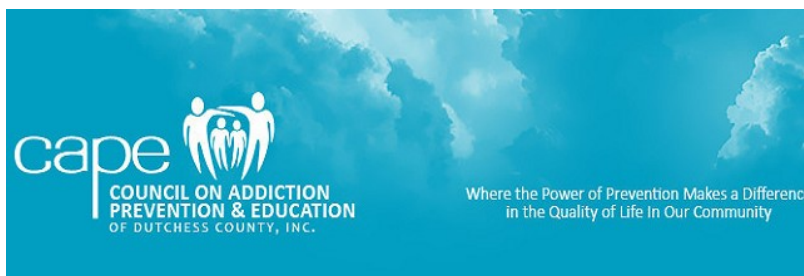
### Recommendations

- Hospitals need to be cooperative with the community and with families
  - Prevention is key and addiction prevention must be addressed at a young age
  - Addiction services and support networks must be centralized and accessible
- Sexual abuse and other indicators that highly correlate with addiction should be addressed in conjunction with addiction prevention, treatment and recovery
  - The opioid industry is being sued for negligence; Dutchess County has signed on to this effort and the opioid industry should be held accountable.

## Agenda and Participants

- 6:30 pm Welcome:** Elaine Trumpetto, E.D., Executive Director, CAPE
- 6:40 pm Moderator:** Stephanie M. Campbell, FOR-NY Executive Director
- Panelists:** Mayor Rob Rolison (Poughkeepsie); NYS Senator Sue Serino; Assembly Member Didi Barrett; A.K. Vaidian, MD (Commissioner, Dutchess County); Marcus Molinaro (Dutchess County Executive); Micki Strawinski (Dutchess County Legislator); Mayor Matt Alexander (Wappingers Falls); Hal Smith (Westchester Medical Center Health Network); Lieutenant Brian Wagner (Poughkeepsie Police Dept.) ; Ohio Oni-Eseleh (Director of Adelphi University School Of Social Work, Hudson Valley Campus); Pastor Taylor Holbrook (Hopewell Reformed Church); Marialice Ryan (Addictions Program Specialist, OASAS); Bob Knapp (Bureau Chief of Narcotics Bureau, Dutchess County District Attorney's Office); Dr. Leroy Nickles, MD, (Medical Director of the Emergency Department at Vassar Brothers Medical Center); Martha Haag (outcomes coordinator of the Emergency Department at Vassar Brothers Medical Center); Thomas Morris (Deputy Director, Dutchess County Office of Probation and Community Corrections); Margaret Hirst, (Deputy Commissioner of the Dutchess County Department of Behavioral and Community Health)
- 6:50 pm Speakers:** Community Members
- 8 :10 pm Comments:** Listening Panel
- 8:25 pm Wrap-Up:** Stephanie Campbell

## Co-Sponsors



SPONSORED BY:



# RECOVERY TALKS:

## Community Listening Forum on Addiction and Recovery

This is a series of local forums being held across New York State to provide community members the opportunity to share personal experiences in dealing with alcohol and drug addiction, loss of a family member or friend, as well as recovery from addiction.

The Listening Forums will engage the community in discussion with local leaders and result in a report titled, The State of Addiction Recovery in New York to better inform the public and policy makers.

**Thursday, Sept. 21, 2017**  
**6:30 pm – 8:30 pm**

**230 North Road**  
**Poughkeepsie, NY 12601**

To register email: [mhetfield@capedc.org](mailto:mhetfield@capedc.org)

**To Speak** Speaker's remarks will be limited to 3 minutes in order to allow as many people as possible to speak

**CO-SPONSORED BY:** Friends of Recovery – Dutchess, and Council on Addiction Prevention and Education in Dutchess County (CAPEDC)



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