

SUMMARY REPORT

FRIENDS OF
RECOVERY
New York

ONE COMMUNITY
ONE VOICE

EVENT: Recovery Talks: Community Listening Forum

DATE: 06.08.2018

LOCATION: Old Court House, Hudson Falls, New York

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

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

CONTACT: 518-487-4395 x 22 **LOCAL CONTACT:** Ashley Livingston, FOR-W&W

About Our Event Activity...

Executive Summary

Friends of Recovery - Warren and Washington Counties and Friends of Recovery - New York co-sponsored the FOR-NY Recovery Talks Community Listening Forum. It was the 21st 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** 35

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

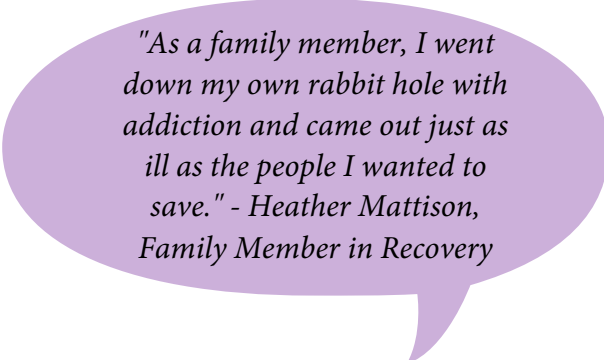
Highlights

- Recovery community in Warren and Washington Counties is supportive and strong. People resources are the greatest recovery capitol available.
- Many found recovery through their experience with the criminal justice system.
- The community struggles to find accessible long term treatment options.
- Family members are key to helping loved ones and at the same time must work their own recovery program.

What we Discovered

Findings

- There is a negative public perception of people with addiction. On top of this, people with addiction often judge people for using medication assisted treatment which is a further deterrent to people seeking recovery.
- The criminal justice system can be a resource to people finding their pathway to recovery but CJS needs more resources to provide treatment.
- The general population who are not involved in the criminal justice system need access to long term treatment beds. Even families who have high paying jobs and health insurance can have great difficulty finding treatment. Without insurance coverage, treatment can cost over \$40,000. Medicaid only pays for ten days of treatment. This is not sufficient to treat what may be multiple years of addictive behavior.
- Family members can be extremely helpful to their loved ones seeking recovery but family members must also work their own recovery program.
- Mental health and addiction are strongly interconnected.
- The Hope and Healing Recovery Community and Outreach Center has been imperative to organizing and supporting the local recovery community.
- Alcohol and Benzodiazepines kill more people than opioids. The disease of addiction must be addressed, not just the current opioid pandemic.
- The US Department of Veteran's Affairs is not meeting the needs of former combat veterans. When a veteran says they need help for their addiction, they deserve to be treated with proper care.
- Treatment is needed to serve different populations including Veterans, Young People and the LGBTQ community.



"As a family member, I went down my own rabbit hole with addiction and came out just as ill as the people I wanted to save." - Heather Mattison, Family Member in Recovery

What we Discovered (Continued)

- Transportation is a huge barrier to treatment for people in Warren and Washington Counties (a mostly rural community). People can drive an hour to learn that there are no treatment beds available.
- Even people who work in Substance Use Disorder treatment have trouble navigating the treatment system.
- Medical marijuana can be a useful tool in treating addiction.
- Medication Assisted Treatment works for many but not for everyone.

Recommendations

"If someone was bleeding profusely, would you put a little bandaid on it or would you clean the wound, wrap it and tend to it? We are spending millions of dollars on 10 days that don't work." - Paula Woodard, Family Member in Recovery

- Grassroots organizations like Friends of Recovery – Warren and Washington Counties must continue to organize boots on the ground to end the negative public perception of people with addiction. People in recovery must continue meeting with local elected officials so their voices are represented in legislation being proposed and moved. The recovery community must continue to reach out to potential allies so that more people will come out of the shadows and help to end the negative public perception of people with addiction.

- Addiction must be treated like the chronic disease that it is, as opposed to being treated acutely.
- Detoxification services must utilize Certified Recovery Peer Advocates.
- Treatment administrators must hear the voices of people in recovery.
- Multiple stakeholders must work together including elected officials, treatment providers and law enforcement.
- Insurance Parity must be enforced so that people with addiction can access affordable treatment services.
- Treatment resources are needed for those in jails and prisons and they are also needed for those who are not involved in the criminal justice system. People in jails and prisons also need access to vocational programs.
- Resources need to be invested in rural communities including transportation and increasing the operational hours of the recovery community and outreach center.
- The Recovery Community should continue offering Medication Assisted Recovery mutual support meetings to support those who use medication to support their recovery.
- The Recovery Community should reach out to the local community services board and make sure the voice of recovery is heard in local plans submitted to the state.
- Stakeholders must collect data at all levels.

Agenda and Participants

- 6:00 pm** **Welcome:** Ashley Livingston, CRPA-P, Co-Chair, Friends of Recovery - Warren and Washington Counties
Stephanie Campbell, Executive Director, FOR-NY
- 6:10 pm** **Moderator:** Allison Weingarten, Director of Policy, FOR-NY
- Panelists:** Don Boyajian, Candidate, New York's 107th Assembly District; Katherine Chambers, Director of Restorative Practices, Council for Prevention; Stacey Dina, Office of Congresswoman Elise Stefanik (21st District); Robert Cook, Deputy Mayor, Hudson Falls; Sue Clary, Town of Salem, Town Supervisor; Tony Jordon, Washington County, District Attorney; Jason McLaughlin, CASAC, Glens Falls Hospital Behavioral Health Services Center for Recovery; Charlie Moak, Connifer Park Outpatient Director; Jennifer Neifeld, CASAC, Program Director, Baywood Center; Bill Nikas, Village Attorney, Hudson Falls; Gary White, CASAC, Program Counselor, Baywood Center; John Wintchell, Washington County Under Sherriff ; Rob York, Local Governmental Unit, Warren and Washington Counties; Assembly Member Carrie Woerner ; Sara Idleman, Town Supervisor of Greenwich
- 6:20 pm** **Speakers:** Community Members
- 7:40 pm** **Comments :** Listening Panel
- 7:55 pm** **Wrap Up:** Stephanie Campbell

Co-Sponsor



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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.

CO-SPONSORED BY:

Friends of Recovery
Warren & Washington



**Friday, June 8, 2018
6:00 PM to 8:00 PM**

**122 Main Street
Upstairs in Old Court House
Hudson Falls, New York 12839**

To register email: Ashley Livingston
gettin2brighterdays@gmail.com

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

For more information contact:
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