

Greater Middletown Opioids Task Force

Wednesday, May 15, 2024, 12pm

Virtual Meeting

Co-Chairs:

Rev. Robyn Anderson, MS, LPC, LMFT, LADC
Executive Director, Ministerial Health Fellowship

Kevin Elak, RS/REHS, CP-FS, Director of Health, City of
Middletown Department of Health



Member Organizations

- Alliance for Living Program
- BHcare
- CCAR
- Chatham Health District
- City of Middletown
- City of Middletown Department of Health
- City of Middletown Fire Department
- City of Middletown Police Department
- Carelon Behavioral Health
- Community Foundation of Middlesex County
- Community Health Center (CHC)
- Connecticut Valley Hospital (CVH)
- CT Harm Reduction Coalition
- DCF Region 3 (Norwich, Willimantic, Middletown)
- Department of Children and Families
- DMHAS (Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services)
- Durham Middlefield Local Wellness Coalition / DMYFS
- Gilead Community Services
- Hunter's Ambulance Service
- Middlesex Community College
- Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce
- Middlesex Health
- Middlesex YMCA
- Middletown Harm Reduction Initiative (MHRI)
- Middletown Public School System
- Middletown Substance Abuse Prevention Council
- Ministerial Health Fellowship
- Overdose Response Strategy | New England HIDTA
- River Valley Services, DMHAS
- Root Center for Advanced Recovery
- Rushford
- St. Vincent de Paul Middletown
- Street Fire Ministries
- The Connection, Women's REACH Program
- The Village for Families & Children
- Town of Cromwell Department of Health
- Town of Cromwell Police Department
- Wesleyan University

Agenda

- Welcome New Members
- Member Spotlight:
 - Tracy Casiero and Latisha Belin, Family Recovery Navigators, Women's REACH / Women's Community Transitional Support (WCTS), The Connection, Inc.
- New Business
- Workgroup / Committee Updates
- Standing Agenda Items
- Member Announcements



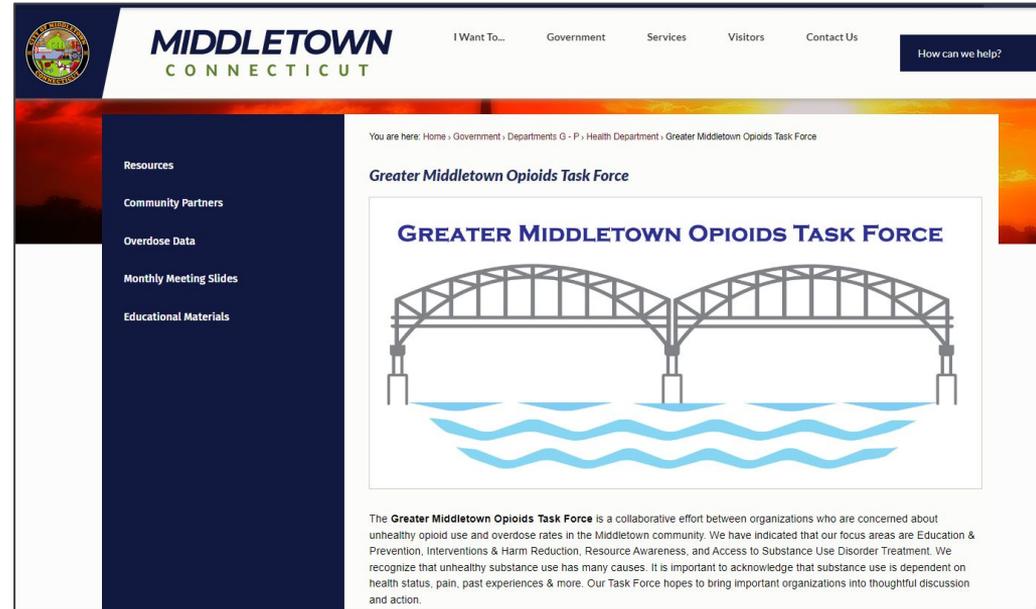
Mission & Vision Statement

- **Mission:** To engage the Greater Middletown community in working together to promote opioid awareness, education, prevention, harm reduction and access to treatment thereby reducing opioid-related overdoses and deaths and building a healthy, safe and drug-free community.
- **Vision:** A community working together to prevent opioid use and to help people experiencing opioid use challenges.



For New Members

- Website:
<https://www.middletownct.gov/1336/Greater-Middletown-Opioids-Task-Force>
- Includes resources and educational material



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Greater Middletown Opioids Task Force

GREATER MIDDLETOWN OPIOIDS TASK FORCE

The **Greater Middletown Opioids Task Force** is a collaborative effort between organizations who are concerned about unhealthy opioid use and overdose rates in the Middletown community. We have indicated that our focus areas are Education & Prevention, Interventions & Harm Reduction, Resource Awareness, and Access to Substance Use Disorder Treatment. We recognize that unhealthy substance use has many causes. It is important to acknowledge that substance use is dependent on health status, pain, past experiences & more. Our Task Force hopes to bring important organizations into thoughtful discussion and action.





New Business

Task Force Peer Support Subcommittee

- Concept: forming a process where Peer Recovery Coach / Specialist / Outreach Workers / First Responders, etc. collaborate on referrals and handoffs.
- Needed: Chair / Co-Chairs to:
 - Outreach for subcommittee membership
 - Set up meetings
 - Set the agenda
 - Etc.



CLEAR Opportunity

OMB No. 1121-0329
Approval Expires 02/28/2027

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
Bureau of Justice Assistance



Solicitation Title: BJA FY24 Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Use Site-Based Program
Assistance Listing Number: 16.838
Grants.gov Opportunity Number: O-BJA-2024-172128
Solicitation Release Date: May 9, 2024
Step 1: Application Grants.gov Deadline: 8:59 p.m. Eastern Time on July 1, 2024
Step 2: Application JustGrants Deadline: 8:59 p.m. Eastern Time on July 8, 2024

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Recovery Friendly Community

Establishing a Recovery Friendly Community (rev. 6/11/20)

This document is intended to provide guidance to municipalities that are interested in supporting those residents who are in recovery from a substance use condition by 1) raising awareness of the nature of such conditions, 2) promoting health and recovery by reducing stigma and discrimination and 3) building or improving the environmental factors necessary for "recoveryees" to flourish. Expected benefits of a Recovery Friendly community may be reduced substance use, reduced overdoses, reduced crime, greater sense of community, social inclusion and connection, improved community health, increased access to resources and positive statewide visibility.

1. Municipal Leadership		Yes	Not yet	Next Steps
a.	The mayor, Town Council and/or Board of Directors is in agreement with developing a recovery friendly community.			
b.	The mayor, Town Council and/or Board of Directors has appointed a recovery "champion". The champion is a person who is committed to supporting recovery from substance use and who is willing and empowered to lead the town/city-wide efforts necessary for becoming "Recovery Friendly" by convening Department heads, other leaders including faith leaders, youth and persons in recovery on a monthly basis to develop and monitor the community enhancements outlined in this document. <i>(The "RFC Planning Group")</i>			
c.	The city/town has a "Local Prevention Council" and if so, this Council is integral to the mission of the Recovery Champion.			
d.	The town website reflects that it is a "Recovery Friendly Community".			
2. Municipal Department "Buy-In"		Yes	Not yet	Next Steps
a.	The Parks and Recreation Department hosts recovery-friendly activities and events.			
b.	The Schools offer one or more of the following: substance use and problem gambling education; education about mental health and wellness including stress reduction and positive coping skills for students, educators, families and other community members; "alternative" peer groups; substance use and possible co-occurring disorder identification; support for youth, families and other caregivers with an identified substance use problem; student recovery groups; recovery promotion and stigma awareness activities.			
c.	Police and Fire Department personnel have knowledge of local addiction and mental health recovery resources and encourage treatment or harm reduction options.			
f.	The city/town welcomes safe and stable recovery housing.			
g.	There are community centers for youth and adults.			

CT Alcohol and Drug Policy Council/Recovery Health Management Sub-Committee

Establishing a Recovery Friendly Community (rev. 6/11/20)

3. Community Attitudes		Yes	Not yet	Next Steps
a.	Businesses are open to hiring people in recovery and advertise same.			
b.	Community organizations are open to providing volunteer opportunities to people in recovery.			
c.	The Community supports formerly incarcerated individuals.			
4. Community Resources		Yes	Not yet	Next Steps
a.	Residents know how and where to obtain Narcan for overdose reversals.			
b.	Hospital emergency departments are recovery informed and have recovery coaches and information on mental health and peer support resources available.			
c.	Faith-based organizations are promoted as a recovery resource.			
d.	Residents know how to access peer support and mutual aid groups and are aware of other pathways to recovery.			
e.	Local transportation is available to individuals seeking treatment or a support group.			
f.	Residents know how and where to access treatment and other recovery resources, including recovery coaches, in the community.			
g.	Residents know how to access "Telephone Recovery Support".			
h.	Physicians that prescribe medication for substance use disorders are easily identified and available.			
i.	Family education and support groups are available for family members and other caregivers.			
j.	Resources related to grief and loss are known and promoted.			
k.	Food, clothing and other basic supports are readily available.			

CT Alcohol and Drug Policy Council/Recovery Health Management Sub-Committee





Member Spotlight

Member Spotlight

Tracy Casiero

Latisha Belin

Family Recovery Navigators

Women's REACH / Women's Community Transitional Support (WCTS)

The Connection, Inc.

100 Roscommon Dr, Middletown, CT 06457

trcasiero@theconnectioninc.org

<https://www.theconnectioninc.org/>



The Connection





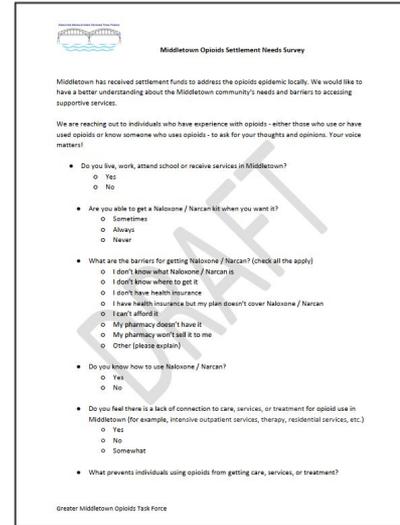
Workgroup / Committee Updates

Middletown Opioids Settlement Funds Ad Hoc Committee

- **Purpose:** To develop a comprehensive plan for use of the City of Middletown Opioids Settlement Funds through a collaborative and transparent approach with input from those with lived experience.

Report out:

- Surveys to capture community voice re: how settlement funds should be used (survey for individuals who have experience with opioids - either those who use opioids, are in recovery or know someone who uses opioids)
 - Survey has been translated into Spanish - *Many thanks to Sarah Messier-Smith and The Village team!*
 - Roll-out plan has been developed. Expected roll-out: mid-late May



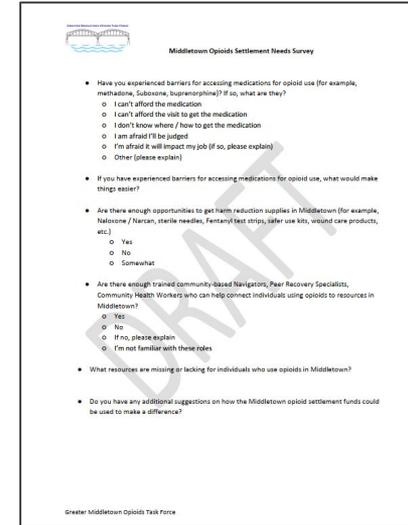
Middletown Opioids Settlement Needs Survey

Middletown has received settlement funds to address the opioids epidemic locally. We would like to have a better understanding about the Middletown community's needs and barriers to accessing supportive services.

We are reaching out to individuals who have experience with opioids - either those who use or have used opioids or know someone who uses opioids - to ask for your thoughts and opinions. Your voice matters!

- Do you live, work, attend school or receive services in Middletown?
 - Yes
 - No
- Are you able to get a Naloxone / Narcan kit when you want it?
 - Sometimes
 - Always
 - Never
- What are the barriers for getting Naloxone / Narcan? (check all that apply)
 - I don't know what Naloxone / Narcan is
 - I don't know where to get it
 - I don't have health insurance
 - I have health insurance but my plan doesn't cover Naloxone / Narcan
 - I can't afford it
 - My pharmacy doesn't have it
 - My pharmacy won't sell it to me
 - Other (please explain)
- Do you know how to use Naloxone / Narcan?
 - Yes
 - No
- Do you feel there is a lack of connection to care, services, or treatment for opioid use in Middletown (for example, intensive outpatient services, therapy, residential services, etc.)
 - Yes
 - No
 - Somewhat
- What prevents individuals using opioids from getting care, services, or treatment?

Greater Middletown Opioids Task Force



Middletown Opioids Settlement Needs Survey

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We are reaching out to individuals who have experience with opioids - either those who use or have used opioids or know someone who uses opioids - to ask for your thoughts and opinions. Your voice matters!

- Have you experienced barriers for accessing medications for opioid use (for example, methadone, Suboxone, buprenorphine)? If so, what are they?
 - I can't afford the medication
 - I can't afford the visit to get the medication
 - I don't know where / how to get the medication
 - I am afraid I'll be judged
 - I'm afraid it will impact my job (if so, please explain)
 - Other (please explain)
- If you have experienced barriers to accessing medications for opioid use, what would make things easier?
- Are there enough opportunities to get harm reduction supplies in Middletown (for example, naloxone / Narcan, sterile needles, fentanyl test strips, safer use kits, wound care products, etc.)
 - Yes
 - No
 - Somewhat
- Are there enough trained community-based Navigators, Peer Recovery Specialists, Community Health Workers who can help connect individuals using opioids to resources in Middletown?
 - Yes
 - No
 - If no, please explain
 - I'm not familiar with these roles
- What resources are missing or lacking for individuals who use opioids in Middletown?
- Do you have any additional suggestions on how the Middletown opioid settlement funds could be used to make a difference?

Greater Middletown Opioids Task Force

Please contact Catherine Rees if you would like join this ad hoc committee (catherine.rees@midhosp.org)



Standing Agenda Items

Standing Agenda Items

- Legislative / Policy Updates





Member Announcements

Announcements

Carelon is excited to share that the recording of the 3/19 **Substance use, society, and social impact: A presentation and fireside chat with Dr. Gabor Maté** is available on the CTBHP website [Educational Forums | Carelon Behavioral Health of Connecticut \(ctbhp.com\)](https://www.ctbhp.com)

This conversation was organized by the CTBHP in conjunction with the CT Hospital Association (CHA).

Objectives included:

- Learn the social basis of addiction in economic, cultural, and political dislocation and disempowerment.
- Enhance self-awareness to foster a reflective approach that positively impacts the delivery of behavioral health services.
- Understand the correlation between chronic conditions (such as substance use) and social environments.
- Explore ways to support a healthier population and the development of therapeutic relationships in addiction treatment.

Connecticut BHP Supporting Health and Recovery | **Carelon** | **CHA** CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

Substance use, society, and social impact: A presentation and fireside chat with Dr. Gabor Maté

Tuesday, March 19, 2024, 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. Eastern time

Join leading experts to:

- Learn the social basis of addiction in economic, cultural, and political dislocation and disempowerment.
- Enhance self-awareness to foster a reflective approach that positively impacts the delivery of behavioral health services.
- Understand the correlation between chronic conditions (such as substance use) and social environments.
- Explore ways to support a healthier population and the development of therapeutic relationships in addiction treatment.

Your speaker:

Gabor Maté (pronunciation: GAH-lar MAH-tay) is a retired physician who, after 30 years of family practice and palliative care experience, worked for over a decade in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside neighborhood with patients challenged by substance use disorder (SUD) and mental illness. The bestselling author of five books published in 35 languages, including the award-winning "In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts: Close Encounters with Addiction," Gabor is an internationally renowned speaker highly sought after for his expertise on addiction, trauma, childhood development, and the relationship of stress and illness. For his groundbreaking medical work and writing he has been awarded the Order of Canada, his country's highest civilian distinction, and the CivicMerit Award from his hometown, Vancouver. His latest book, "The Myth of Normal: Trauma, Illness & Healing in a Toxic Culture" remains a Canadian best seller and was a 19-week New York Times best seller. To learn more, join his e-news list at www.drgabormate.com

Your host:

Maria Coustant Skinner, LCSW, CEO of the McCall Behavioral Health Network (BHN) After serving in many diverse roles, Maria became the CEO of McCall BHN in 2013. That same year, she co-founded and continues to co-chair the Litchfield County Opiate Task Force, a multi-agency, multi-disciplinary community collaborative that works to reduce addiction and overdoses in the region. The group has had far-reaching impacts on shaping culture around root causes of addiction, education, community connection, and influence on healthcare policy. Maria is Board Chair at Charlotte Hungerford Hospital, past president of the Rotary Club of Torrington and Windsted areas, serves on the boards of multiple non-profit organizations, and co-chairs the treatment committee of the CT Alcohol Drug Policy Council.

Select here to register for the forum

For additional information, please contact Lynn.Kelley@carelon.com or ctbhp@carelon.com

This event is available at no cost to you and offers the following credits: National Association for Social Workers (NASW) continuing education credits (CEC) and continuing medical education credits (CME) for physicians and nurses. This educational forum has been approved by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) for psychologists CECs. Carelon Behavioral Health is an approved sponsor for the Connecticut Certification Board (CCB).



Any Member Announcements?



Work Status / Tracking

Completed Work

Completed 2024

- Formation of Middletown Opioids Settlement Funds Ad Hoc Committee



Completed Work

Completed 2022	Completed 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Formation of Task Force (January 2022)● Member Prioritization Survey (April)● Formation of 4 Workgroups (Access to Treatment; Education & Prevention; Intervention / Harm Reduction; Resource Awareness)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Flier for Narcan Leave Behind Kits (April 2023)● Narcan Leave Behind Kits partnership with South Fire District, Middletown (April 2023)● Xylazine Informational piece (May 2023)● Harm Reduction Training by Mark Jenkins, Executive Director, CT Harm Reduction Coalition at Cross Street A.M.E. Zion Church (8.16.23)● Harm Reduction RV - Village Expanded Recovery Vehicle (VERV) (Launched 9.6.23; Ribbon Cutting 10.25.23)● Resource Guide (9.30.23)



Next Meeting

- Wednesday, June 19, 2024, 12pm, Zoom

