

# Greater Middletown Opioids Task Force

Wednesday, February 19, 2025, 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
- Data Review
- Livia Cox, Co-Director, Middletown Harm Reduction Initiative and Advocacy Team Representative for Senator Anwar's Overdose Prevention Efforts - SB285 for Overdose Prevention Centers in Connecticut
- Updates
- Workgroup / Committee Updates
- Standing Agenda Items
- Member Announcements



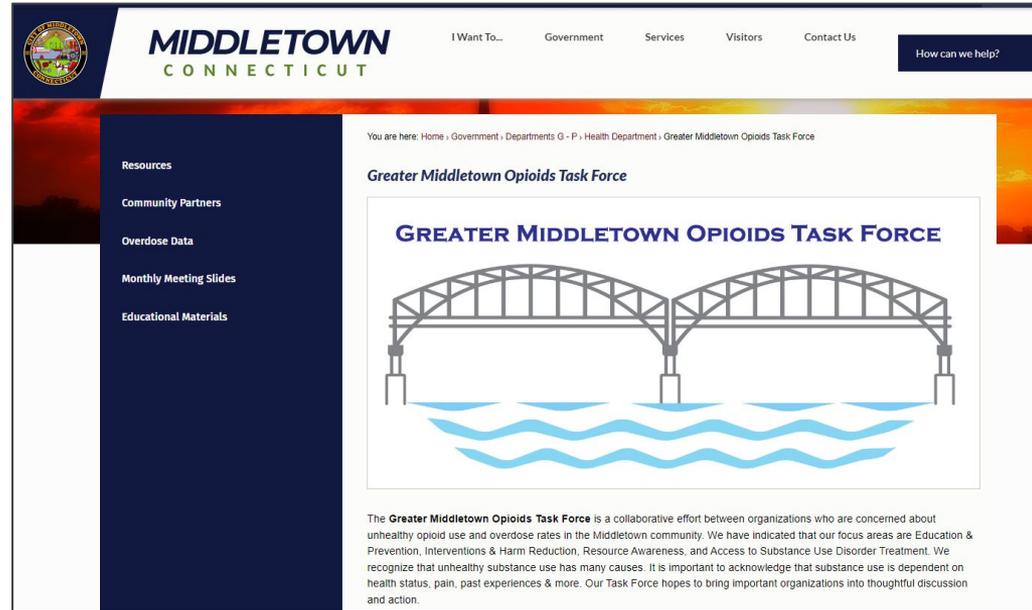
# Mission & Vision Statement

- **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

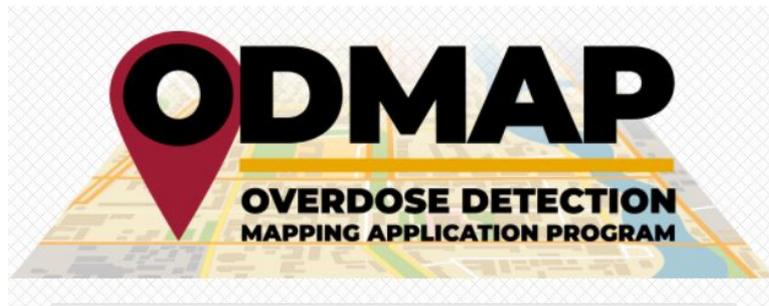


The screenshot shows the website for the Greater Middletown Opioids Task Force. At the top left is the Middletown Connecticut seal. The header includes the text "MIDDLETOWN CONNECTICUT" and navigation links: "I Want To...", "Government", "Services", "Visitors", and "Contact Us". A dark blue button on the right says "How can we help?". A breadcrumb trail reads "You are here: Home > Government > Departments G - P > Health Department > Greater Middletown Opioids Task Force". A dark blue sidebar on the left contains a menu with the following items: "Resources", "Community Partners", "Overdose Data", "Monthly Meeting Slides", and "Educational Materials". The main content area features the title "Greater Middletown Opioids Task Force" above a logo depicting a bridge over water. Below the logo is a paragraph of text: "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."



# Opioid Overdoses Nonfatal and Fatal

Cromwell, Durham, Middlefield, Middletown and Portland



#### Changes to ODMAP Reporting as of July 1, 2024:

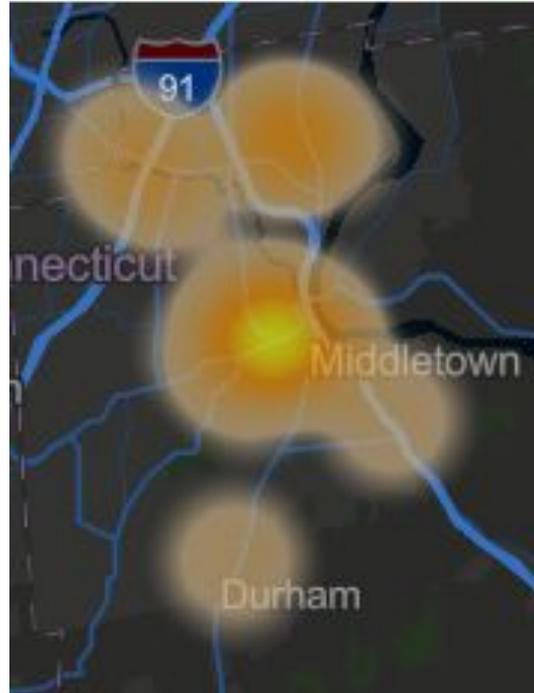
- ▶ Overdoses are no longer reported to Connecticut Poison Control Center.
- ▶ The CT Department of Public Health developed a new program called API to capture overdose information in Connecticut.
- ▶ API used ImageTrend using data from Electronic Patient Care Records

Overdoses from January 1 - February 18, 2025  
Cromwell, Durham, Middlefield, Middletown and Portland

<b>Total Suspected Overdoses</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Fatal Overdoses</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Naloxone Administered</b>	<b>1*</b>

\*Naloxone Administered data not available after 6/30/24

Overdose Heatmap from 1/1/25 - 2/18/25  
Cromwell, Durham, Middlefield, Middletown, Portland

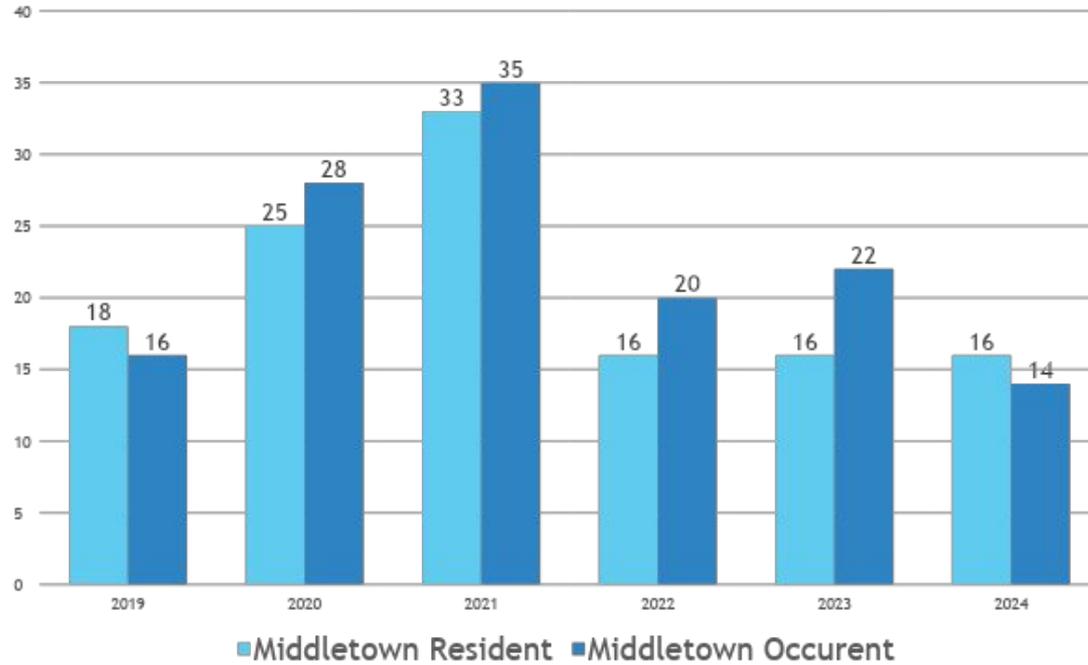


# Middletown Unintentional Overdose Deaths

2019 - 2024  
(as of 1-16-25)

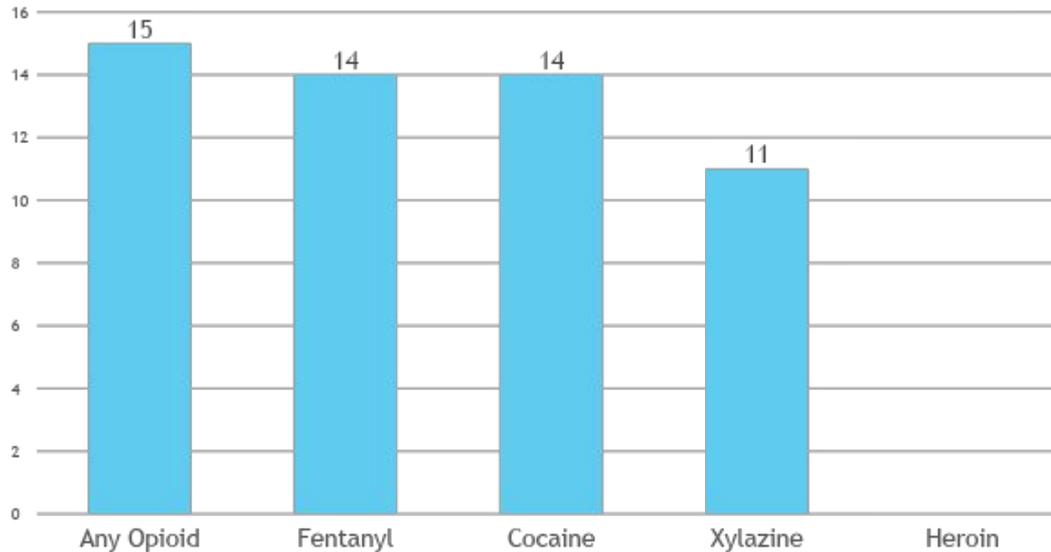
Source: Office of the CT Chief Medical  
Examiner

## Unintentional Overdose Deaths

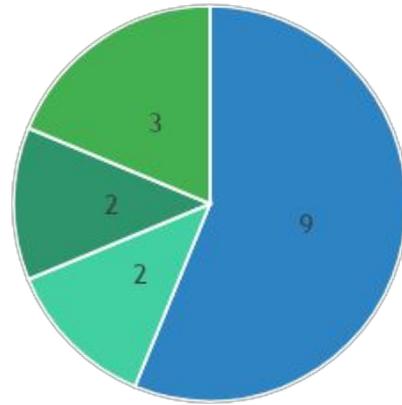


# 2024 Unintentional Fatal Overdoses Cause of Death (by substance)

16 Middletown Residents

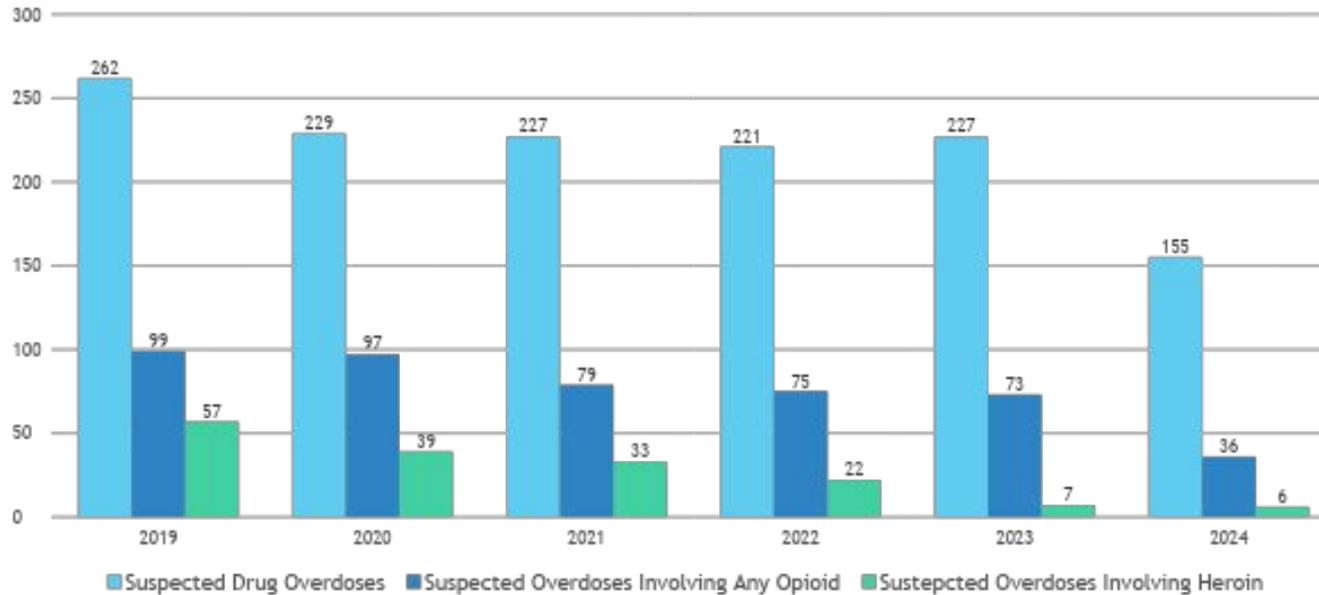


# 2024 Unintentional Fatal Overdoses Location of Death 16 Middletown Residents



Location of Death Decedent's Home Hospital Other home Motel/Hotel

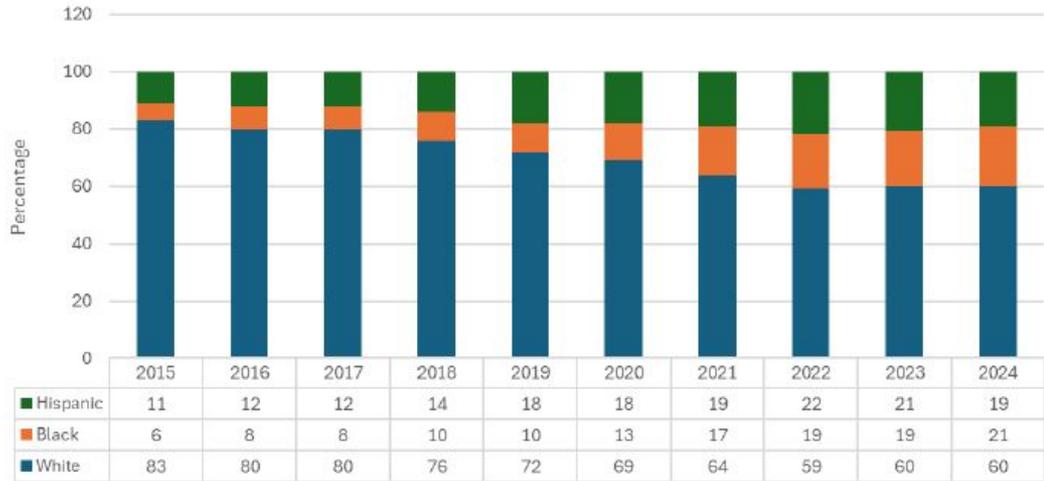
# Middletown Non-fatal drug overdoses 2019-2024



Source: EpiCenter 4.0.3

# Connecticut Fatal Overdose By Race %

Connecticut Fatal Opioid Overdose by Race Percentage  
2015-2024 (2024 through October)

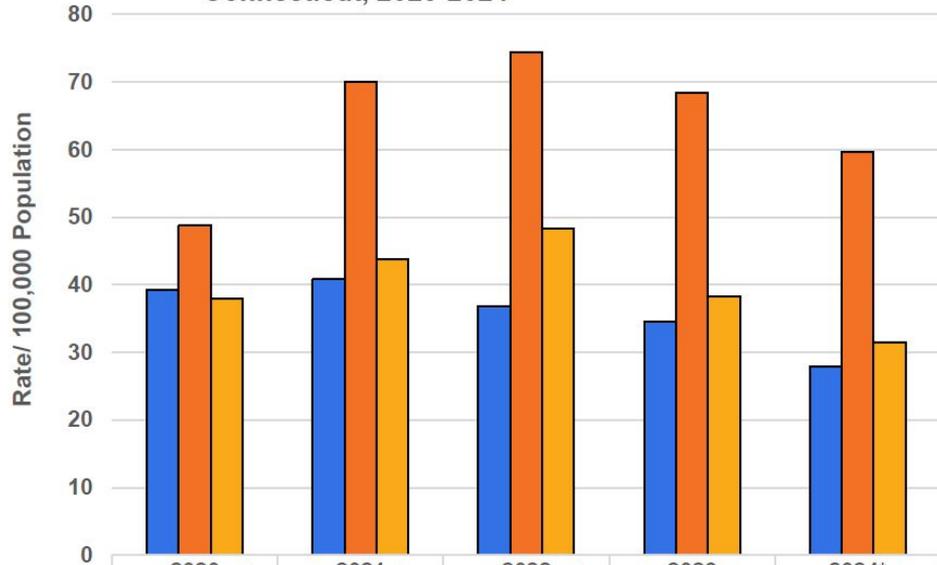


Source: CT DPH

White Black Hispanic

Source: CT EMS SWORD, December 2024

**Figure 5: Rate of Unintentional and Undetermined Drug Overdose Deaths per 100,000 Population, by Race/Ethnicity, Connecticut, 2020-2024\***



■ Non-Hispanic White race	39.2	40.8	36.9	34.5	27.9
■ Non-Hispanic Black race	48.8	70.0	74.4	68.4	59.6
■ Hispanic all races	37.9	43.8	48.3	38.3	31.5

**Source:** CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH Fatal Unintentional and Undetermined Intent Drug Overdose Report, January 17, 2025



Resource

# Connecticut Association of Directors of Health (CADH) Opioid Toolkit

## Essential Measures

Opioid and Substance Use Disorder Toolkit for Connecticut



[CT Opioid Toolkit](#)





Spotlight

# Guest Speaker - SB285 for Overdose Prevention Centers in Connecticut

## Livia Cox

Co-Director, Middletown Harm Reduction Initiative

Advocacy Team Representative for Senator Anwar's Overdose Prevention Efforts

[board@middletownhri.org](mailto:board@middletownhri.org)

**MIDDLETOWN**  
HARM REDUCTION  
**INITIATIVE**



# Committee / Workgroup Updates

# Committee / Workgroup Updates

Harm Reduction / Intervention Workgroup	Middletown Opioids Settlement Funds Grant Advisory Committee	Middletown Opioids Settlement Funds Ad Hoc Committee	Recovery Coach / Peer Support Workgroup
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan for Fentanyl test strip distribution with GMOTF branded use instructions (under development)</li> <li>• Potential vending machine opportunity</li> <li>• Recovery Friendly Community - started completion of checklist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (2) meetings held to review and score (6) grant applications in aggregate</li> <li>• Next steps include development of award letters, recommendation to the Common Council to accept committee recommendations during 3.4.25 meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No new updates; focus has shifted to Grant Advisory Committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First meeting TBD</li> </ul>
<p>Interested in joining? Email Catherine Rees <a href="mailto:catherine.rees@midhosp.org">catherine.rees@midhosp.org</a></p>		<p>Interested in joining? Email Catherine Rees <a href="mailto:catherine.rees@midhosp.org">catherine.rees@midhosp.org</a></p>	<p>Interested in joining? Email Rev. Anderson <a href="mailto:revrmanderson@gmail.com">revrmanderson@gmail.com</a></p>





# Underway & Standing Agenda Items

# Underway, Considerations & Standing Agenda Items

Planned / Underway	Standing Agenda Items	Future Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>No new updates</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>CT Opioid Settlement Advisory Committee (OSAC) Updates <a href="#">OSAC Website</a> <a href="#">OSAC Bylaws</a></li><li>Legislative / Policy Updates</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Recovery Friendly Community</li><li>Definition of Task Force geographic area</li><li>CLEAR-type concept</li></ul>





# Goals for 2025 Survey Themes

# Middletown Opioids Settlement Needs Survey Results

- Themes:
  - Access / Resource Availability and Awareness
  - Training
  - Collaboration
- Using the results of the Middletown Opioids Settlement Needs Survey to guide the GMOTF areas of focus / goals.



## Survey Theme: Access / Resource Availability and Awareness Themes

### Barriers / Suggestions

#### Access to Care:

- Access to appointments.
- Availability of medications, including pain medication.
- "Good" treatment.
- Not enough beds; long wait times.
- Van hours are limited and Reach Navigators cut down on length of service.
- Uninsured / Cost

#### Navigators / Coaches:

- More community navigators are needed.
- More recovery coaches.
- Funding towards case management and social work and housing navigators.
- Peer support program.
- Outreach and support to individuals hanging out on Main Street.

#### Social Drivers of Health:

- Transportation:
  - Provide bus passes to social service agencies to distribute in support of wellness needs not covered by NEMT.
  - Free transportation for non-medical needs (to access other services, parks, social activities, shopping).
- Housing:
  - Affordable housing.
  - Homelessness.
- Unmet basic needs (including income; transportation).
- Help individuals who used opiates and are out of work pay bills.

#### Internal motivation:

- Testing for accountability and a gauge on treatment levels.

## Survey Theme: Access / Resource Availability and Awareness Themes

### Barriers / Suggestions

#### Resources:

- Advertising existing resources.
- Limited free resources.
- Free harm reduction.
- Places to hold support meetings.

#### Resource Awareness:

- Awareness of the community of where free products are available
- Unaware of a peer recovery program, if there is one it isn't well advertised but I believe it would be very beneficial.
- Visible care and support; where are the lawn signs or storefront flyers in support of harm reduction around here?

#### Provider Education on Resources:

- Distribution of information to inform care providers of resources for access to harm reduction products at no cost or covered by insurance with no copay for those insured.

#### Programming:

- Create person centered holistic programs.
- Free safe recreation center for day and evening hours.
- Educational programs

#### Personal Feelings:

- Shame / Guilt.
- Loneliness / Lack of healthy socialization.

#### Other:

- Everything a person dealing with substance misuse needs.
- Afraid of being reported.
- Funding to methadone clinics and suboxone for more frequent testing to determine effectiveness of treatment vs. harm reduction model.

# Survey Theme: Training

## Suggestions

### General:

- Stigma
- Lack of empathy / feeling judged
- Have people care.
- Caring & understanding of the what, where and why's of their mental and physical issues.
- Getting to know the individuals using drugs and the issues leading to drug use.
- They don't take the time to understand what people are going through and why it has happened to them.

### Community:

- More public awareness trainings.
- Training for how to use Narcan.

### Providers / Healthcare Organizations:

- More trainings for providers on how to work collaboratively with all providers to fully serve the client.
- Many service providers are not trained properly or don't know of the exact needs of clients.
- More education & classes for all doctors & patients for mental and physical issues.
- Learn individuality. Each patient is different, one program doesn't fit all.

### Pay Equity:

- Pay people to do the training.

### Other:

- Confidentiality / Privacy.



## Survey Theme: Collaboration

### Suggestions

- Communication.
- They need more staff and a more cohesive work with the methadone and suboxone providers versus siloed services.





# Member Announcements

## Any Member Announcements?



## Task Force Member Spotlight



Please contact Catherine Rees at [catherine.rees@midhosp.org](mailto:catherine.rees@midhosp.org)  
if you would like to give a member spotlight



# Annual Dates

## Annual Dates

- SAMSHA's Prevention Day - February 3, 2025
- National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day - April 2025 (date TBD)
- National Prevention Week - May 11-17, 2025
- Overdose Awareness Day - August 31st
- Substance Use Prevention Month - October
- National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day - October 2025 (date TBD)

# Work Status / Tracking

# Completed Work

## Completed 2025

- Middletown Opioids Settlement Needs Survey Analysis & Presentation (January 2025)
- Formation of Middletown Opioids Settlement Funds Grant Advisory Committee (February 2025)
- Shared Middletown Opioids Settlement Needs Survey & Presentation of Results with GMOTF members to share with their networks (February 2025)
- Pending Completion:
  - Grant awards
  - Fentanyl test strip distribution and education
  - Formation of Recovery Support / Peer Support Workgroup



# Completed Work

## Completed 2024

- Formation of Middletown Opioids Settlement Funds Ad Hoc Committee (February 2024)
- Task Force Logo developed (March 2024)
- Development of Narcan How To educational piece in English and Spanish (August 2024)
- Participation in The Governor's Prevention Partnership Overdose Awareness Day Press Conference (8.28.24)
- Leave Behind Kits Launch (September 2024)
- Middletown Opioids Settlement Needs Survey - centering voices with lived experience to identify needs to guide distribution of Middletown opioids settlement funds (October 2024)
- Grants application process for Middletown opioids settlement funds (December 2024)



# Completed Work

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



## Next Meeting

- Wednesday, March 19, 2025, 12pm, Zoom

