

Greater Middletown Opioids Task Force

Wednesday, March 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
- Member Spotlight:
 - Aleksandra Slaski M.Ed., LPC, Director of Clinical Development, The Connection, Inc.
 - Rachael Lazor, Women's Recovery Navigator, Women's REACH Program, The Connection, Inc.
 - Carrie Kinsella, Women's Recovery Navigator, Women's REACH Program, The Connection, Inc.
- Updates
- Workgroup / Committee Updates
- Standing Agenda Items
- Member Announcements



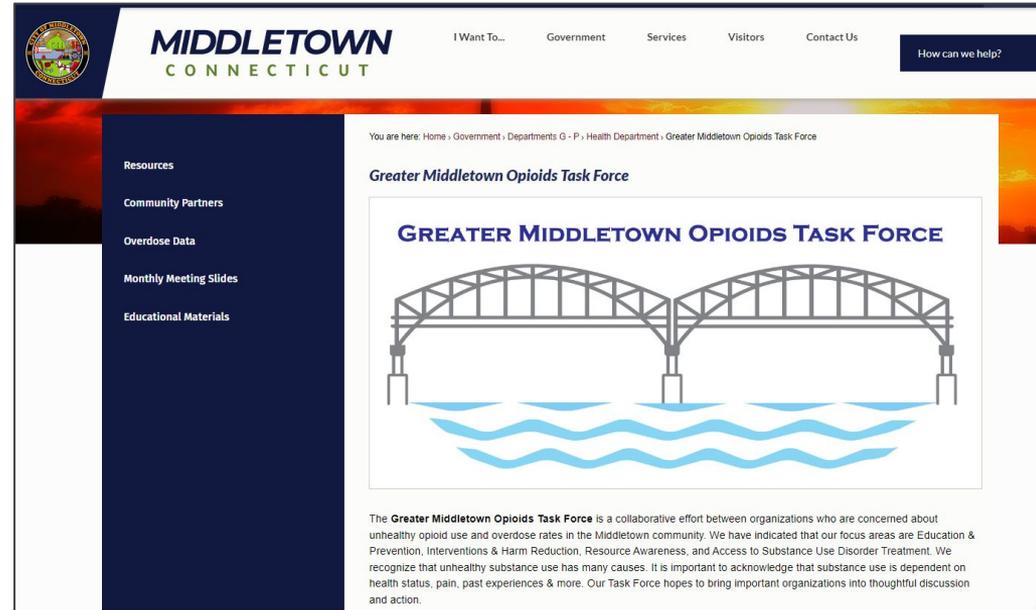
Mission & Vision Statement

- **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



MIDDLETOWN CONNECTICUT

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How can we help?

You are here: Home > Government > Departments G - P > Health Department > Greater Middletown Opioids Task Force

Greater Middletown Opioids Task Force

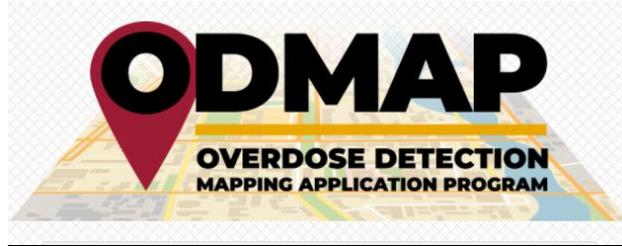
GREATER MIDDLETOWN OPIOIDS TASK FORCE

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.



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

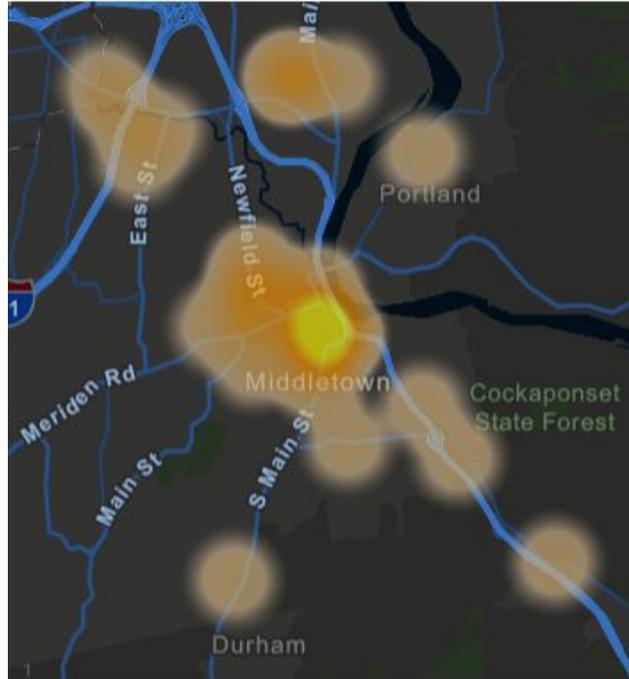
Overdoses from January 1 - March 18, 2025

Cromwell, Durham, Middlefield, Middletown and
Portland

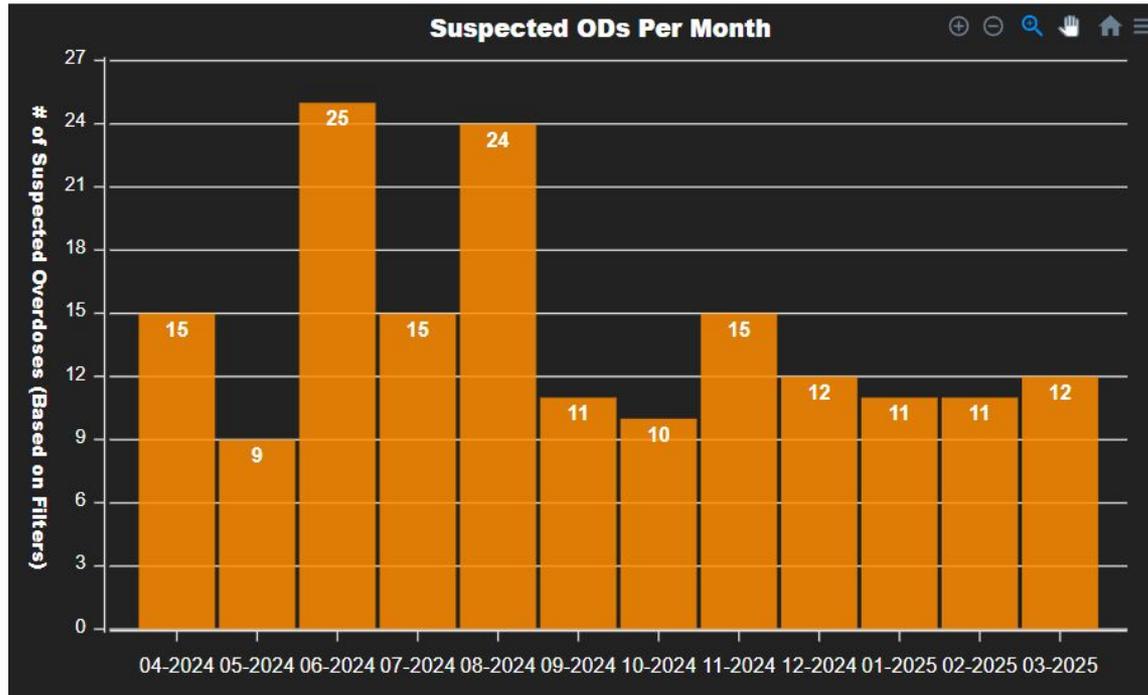
Total Suspected Overdoses	34
Fatal Overdoses	4
Naloxone Administered	1*

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

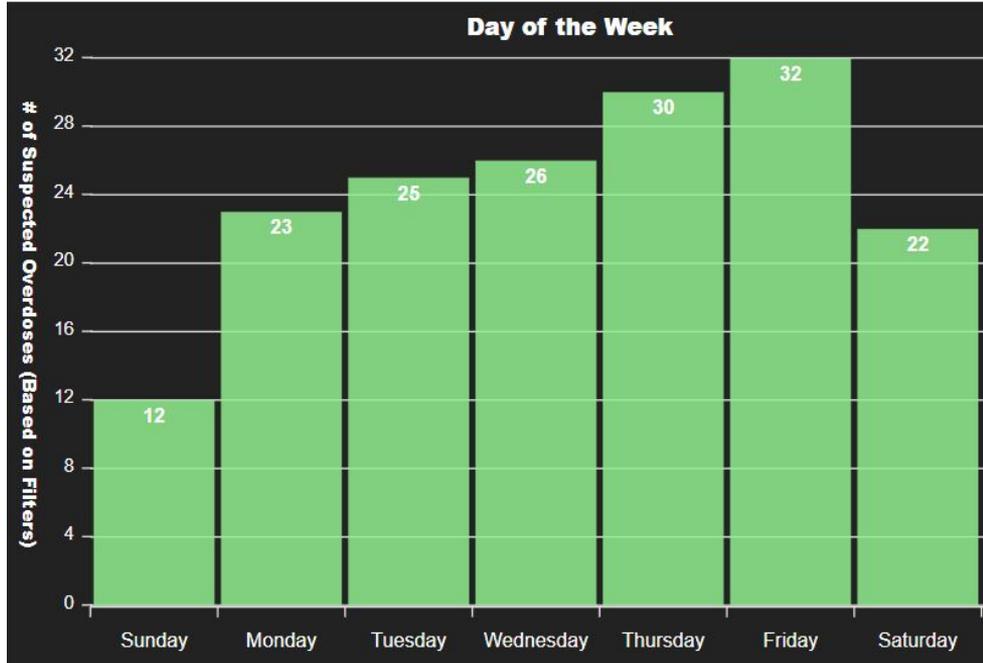
Overdose Heatmap from 1/1/25 - 3/18/25
Cromwell, Durham, Middlefield, Middletown, Portland



Suspected Overdoses per Month April 2024 - March 18, 2025



Suspected Overdoses by Day of the Week April 2024 - March 18, 2025

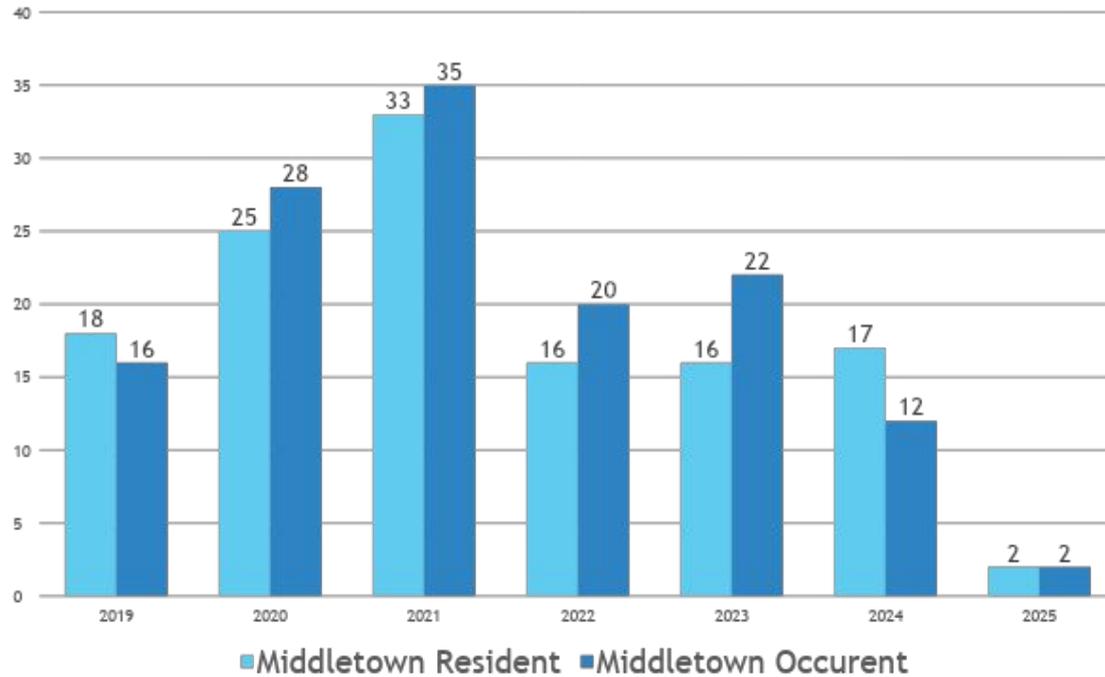


Middletown Unintentional Overdose Deaths

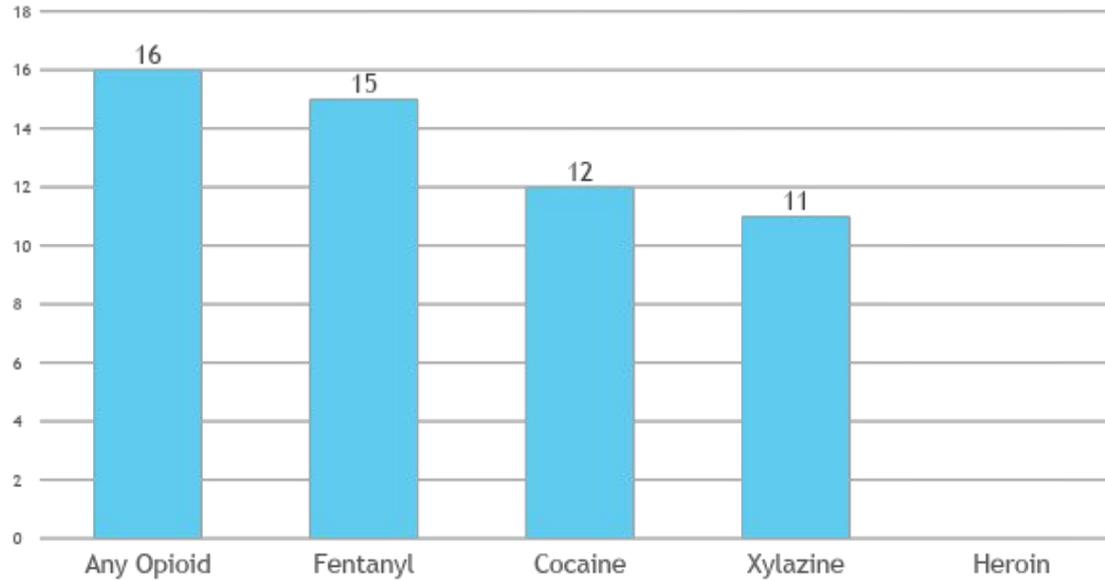
2019 - 2025
(as of 3-5-25)

Source: Office of the CT Chief Medical
Examiner

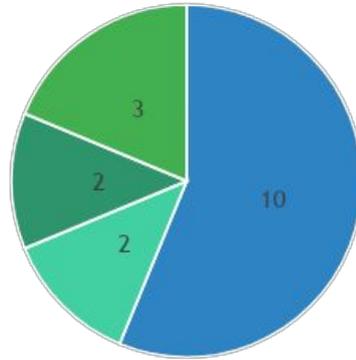
Middletown Unintentional Overdose Deaths 2019-2025



2024 Unintentional Fatal Overdoses 17 Middletown Residents Cause of Death (by substance)

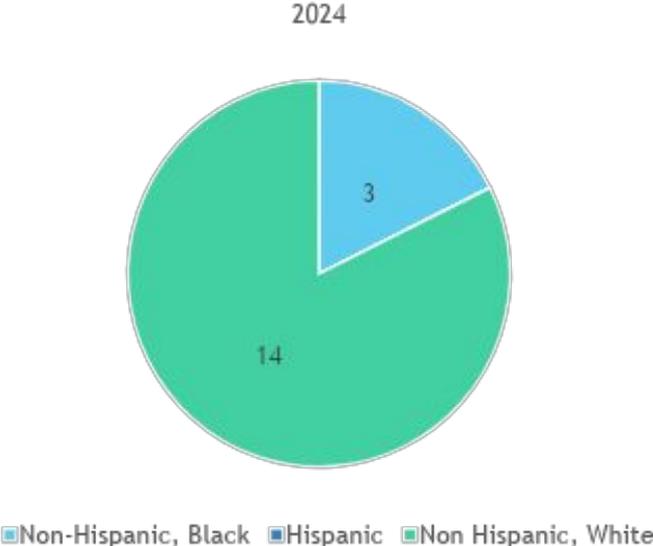


2024 Unintentional Fatal Overdoses 17 Middletown Residents Location of Death

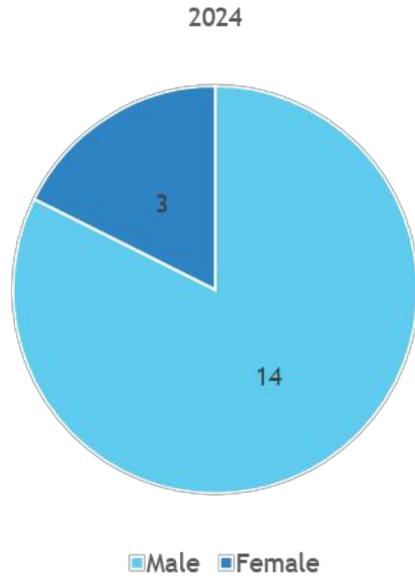


■ Location of Death ■ Decedent's Home ■ Hospital ■ Other home ■ Motel/Hotel

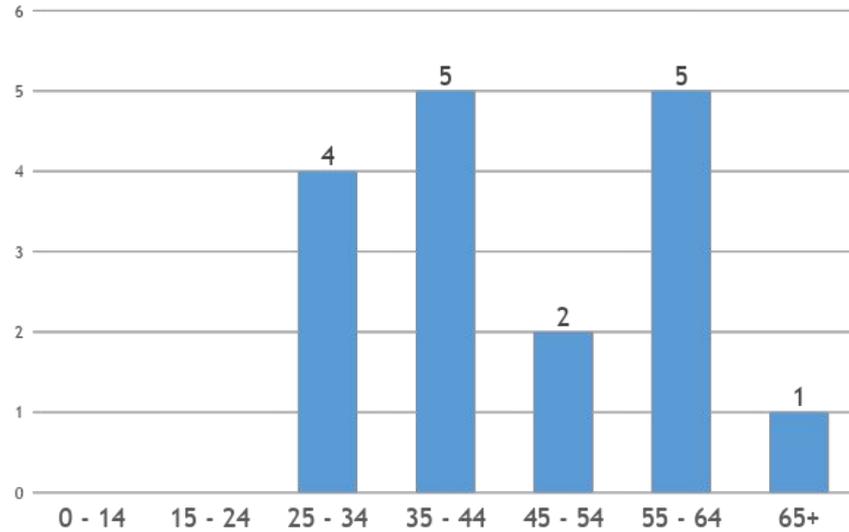
2024 Unintentional Fatal Overdoses 17 Middletown Residents By Race/Ethnicity



2024 Unintentional Fatal Overdoses 17 Middletown Residents By Gender



2024 Unintentional Fatal Overdoses 17 Middletown Residents By Age Group





Spotlight

Member Spotlight

Aleksandra Slaski M.Ed., LPC, Director of Clinical Development

Rachael Lazor, Women's Recovery Navigator, Women's REACH Program

Carrie Kinsella, Women's Recovery Navigator, Women's REACH Program

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



Committee / Workgroup Updates

Committee / Workgroup Updates

Harm Reduction / Intervention Workgroup

- Fentanyl test strip distribution with GMOTF branded use instructions underway
- Recovery Friendly Community - checklist completion continues
- Potential vending machine opportunity

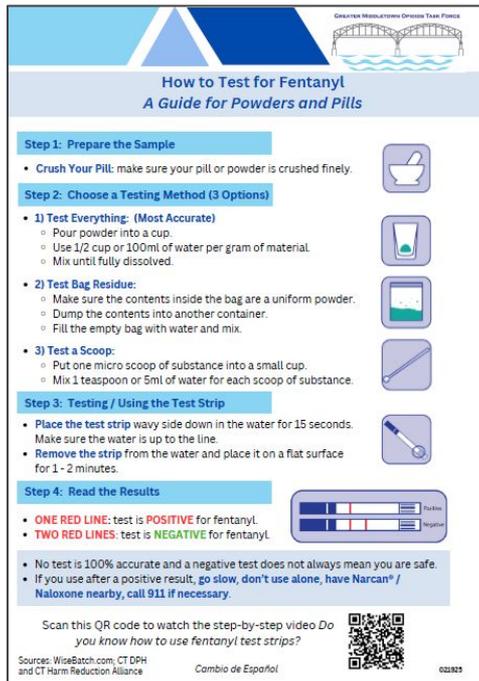
Interested in joining?
Email Catherine Rees

catherine.rees@midhosp.org

Fentanyl Test Strip Instructions:

- QR Code for CT DPH and CT Harm Reduction Alliance step-by-step video
Do you know how to use fentanyl test strips?
- Will be translated into Spanish
- Upon completion, will be included in Fentanyl Test Strip bags, shared with the GMOTF members and posted to the GMOTF website
- Opportunity for Train the Trainer?

DRAFT - Under Review



How to Test for Fentanyl
A Guide for Powders and Pills

Step 1: Prepare the Sample

- **Crush Your Pill:** make sure your pill or powder is crushed finely.

Step 2: Choose a Testing Method (3 Options)

- **1) Test Everything: (Most Accurate)**
 - Pour powder into a cup.
 - Use 1/2 cup or 100ml of water per gram of material.
 - Mix until fully dissolved.
- **2) Test Bag Residue:**
 - Make sure the contents inside the bag are a uniform powder.
 - Dump the contents into another container.
 - Fill the empty bag with water and mix.
- **3) Test a Scoop:**
 - Put one micro scoop of substance into a small cup.
 - Mix 1 teaspoon or 5ml of water for each scoop of substance.

Step 3: Testing / Using the Test Strip

- Place the test strip wavy side down in the water for 15 seconds. Make sure the water is up to the line.
- Remove the strip from the water and place it on a flat surface for 1 - 2 minutes.

Step 4: Read the Results

- **ONE RED LINE:** test is **POSITIVE** for fentanyl.
- **TWO RED LINES:** test is **NEGATIVE** for fentanyl.

• No test is 100% accurate and a negative test does not always mean you are safe.
• If you use after a positive result, **go slow, don't use alone, have Narcan® / Naloxone nearby, call 911 if necessary.**

Scan this QR code to watch the step-by-step video *Do you know how to use fentanyl test strips?*

Sources: WiseBatch.com, CT DPH and CT Harm Reduction Alliance

Cambio de Español

02023

Committee / Workgroup Updates

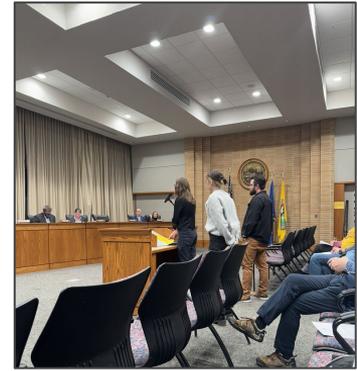
Middletown Opioids Settlement Funds Grant Advisory Committee

- *Congrats to awardees!*
- Round 1 complete - (4) awardees
- Award letters developed; contracts will go out; funds will be released upon completion of contracts

- Common Council Finance and Government Operations Committee meeting 2.26.25 - Approved recommendations
- Common Council meeting 3.3.25 - Approved recommendations

Thank you to Kevin Elak for overseeing this process!

And, thank you GMOTF members who attended the Common Council Meeting to support the Middletown opioids settlement funds process!



Committee / Workgroup Updates

Middletown Opioids Settlement Funds Ad Hoc Committee	Recovery Coach / Peer Support Workgroup
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No new updates; on hiatus until Round 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First meeting TBD
Interested in joining? Email Catherine Rees catherine.rees@midhosp.org	Interested in joining? Email Rev. Anderson revrmanderson@gmail.com





Underway & Standing Agenda Items

Underway, Considerations & Standing Agenda Items

Planned / Underway	Standing Agenda Items	Future Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">No new updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">CT Opioid Settlement Advisory Committee (OSAC) Updates OSAC Website OSAC BylawsLegislative / Policy Updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Definition of Task Force geographic areaCLEAR-type concept





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
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)
- City of Middletown Common Council Finance and Government Operations Committee meeting - approved GMOTF Grants Committee recommendations (2.26.25)
- City of Middletown Common Council meeting - approved GMOTF Grants Committee recommendations; (3) GMOTF members spoke in support of the recommendations (3.3.25)
- City of Middletown Opioids Settlement Funds Round 1 grant awards completed (March 2025)
- Pending Completion:
 - Formation of Fentanyl test strip GMOTF branded use instructions (English and Spanish)
 - Fentanyl test strip bags 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 Project 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)
- Leave Behind Kit Distribution (December 2024)



Completed Work

Completed 2022	Completed 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Formation of Task Force (January 2022)● Member Prioritization Survey (April 2022)● 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, April 16, 2025, 12pm, Zoom

