

Greater Middletown Opioids Task Force

Wednesday, September 17, 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
- All-In Recovery
- BHcare
- CCAR
- Chatham Health District
- City of Middletown
- City of Middletown Department of Health
- City of Middletown Fire Department
- City of Middletown Police Department
- Caredon Behavioral Health
- Community Foundation of Middlesex County
- Community Health Center (CHC)
- Connecticut Valley Hospital (CVH)
- CT Harm Reduction Alliance (CTHRA)
- 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
- Hartford Health Department
- Hunter's Ambulance Service / Hartford Healthcare
- 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:
 - Josh Habib, All-In Recovery
- Updates
- Workgroup / Committee Updates
- Standing Agenda Items
- Member Announcements



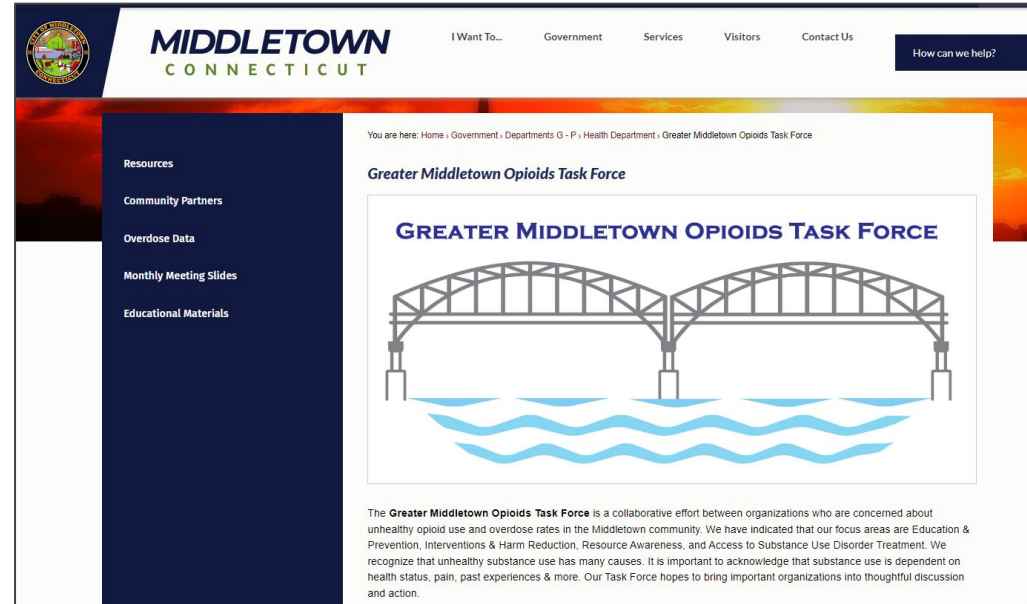
Mission & Vision Statement

- **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.



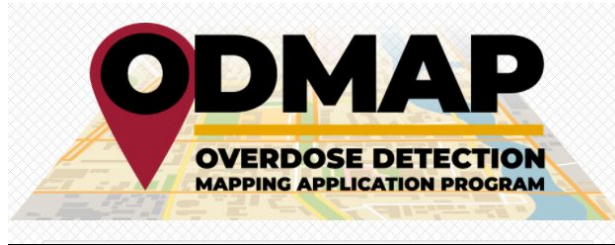
For New Members

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



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



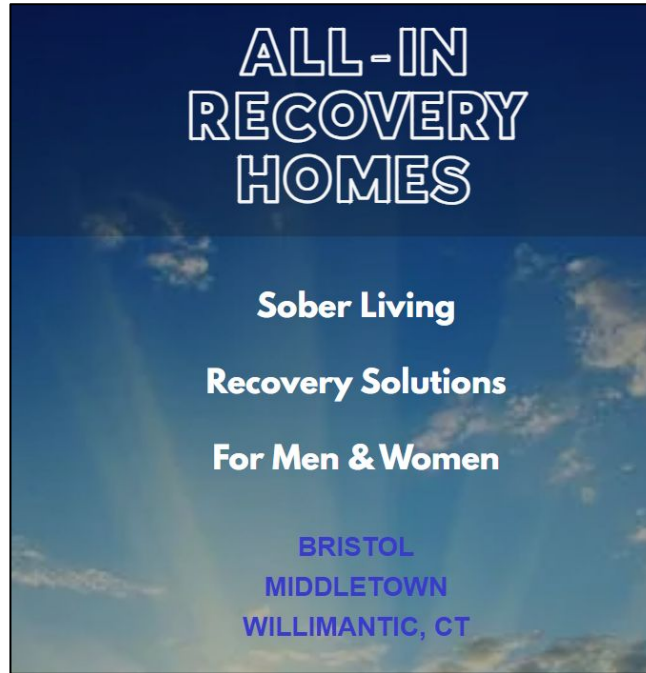
Spotlight

Member Spotlight

Joshua Habib

All-In Recovery

<https://allinrecoveryhomes.com/>





Updates

Safe Spot

- New resource, recently announced by DMHAS.
- The number one risk factor for a fatal overdose is using alone. In such situations, life-saving medication like naloxone (NARCAN® Nasal Spray) cannot be self-administered. That's where SafeSpot comes in.



Using drugs by yourself? Call SafeSpot at 1-800-972-0590.

The number one risk factor for fatal overdose is using alone. Naloxone, also known as NARCAN® Nasal Spray, cannot be self-administered during an overdose. SafeSpot is here for you when others cannot be. Get connected with a trained operator who will:

- stay on the line while you use
- ask for your location in case you stop responding
- call for help in case of overdose

The helpline does not collect personal information and the address you give is not stored in any database. We are committed to your safety and confidentiality.

Stay safe and call SafeSpot today **+1 (800) 972-0590**

*SafeSpot is not a recovery or treatment helpline.

- **Safe Spot** is a confidential overdose prevention hotline designed to save lives.
 - By calling **800-972-0590**, individuals are connected with a trained operator who will:
 - Stay on the line while they use
 - Ask for their location in case they stop responding
 - Call for help immediately if an overdose is suspected
- Links for additional materials:
 - <https://liveloud.org/stay-safe/>
 - <https://safe-spot.me/>





Workgroup Updates

Committee / Workgroup Updates

Harm Reduction / Intervention Workgroup

- Recovery Friendly Community - work continues
- Group meets: 4th Tuesday of the month @ 10am, Zoom
- Interested in joining? Email Catherine Rees
catherine.rees@midhosp.org



Committee / Workgroup Updates

Recovery Coach / Peer Support Workgroup

- Resource awareness
 - Community service utilization
-
- Group meets: 3rd Thursday of the month @ 3pm, Zoom
 - 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
No new updates	- CT Opioid Settlement Advisory Committee (OSAC) Updates OSAC Website OSAC Bylaws - Legislative / Policy Updates - Opioid Prevention Center in Connecticut	- Definition of Task Force geographic area - CLEAR-type concept



Greater Middletown Opioids Task Force

Middletown Opioids Settlement
Needs Survey

Presentation for GMOTF Task
Force Meeting January 21, 2025





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
• 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)	• 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, October 15, 2025, 12pm, Zoom

