



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

## Candid Forum on Heroin and Opioid Addiction Brings Community Together for Honest Discussion and Raises Critical Awareness

SUSAN SERINO October 4, 2018



WAPPINGERS FALLS, NY – With overdose numbers continuing to climb throughout the community, Senator Sue Serino—in conjunction with the Dutchess County Department of Behavioral and Community Health, the Dutchess County Sheriff's Office, and the Change Your Thinking Change Your Life Foundation—held a unique community forum to take a multi-dimensional approach to combatting the heroin and opioid epidemic.

The event kicked off with a free Narcan training session led by Dr. Kia Newman, Dutchess County's Medical Examiner and a leader in the fight against this devastating epidemic. Narcan is a medication known to reverse the effects of an overdose long enough for an individual to receive critical medical care, and participants were given a free Narcan kit to help prevent overdose deaths here in the community.

Individuals in recovery from the Change Your Thinking Change Your Life Foundation, as well as the organization's founder, Anthony Eack, formed a panel to candidly answer questions from the audience about their experiences with addiction and recovery. Audience members sought answers to questions ranging from when the panelists first began using these substances, to what methods worked best for them in recovery, and what signs they should look for if they believe someone is abusing drugs.

"The number of individuals overdosing from heroin or other opioids is increasing year after year, and as a community, we have a responsibility to come together to learn about this epidemic and to take meaningful action to help," said Senator Sue Serino. "I applaud the individuals from the Change Your Thinking Change Your Life Foundation for honestly sharing their experiences and for offering to answer questions from those in the audience who might have a loved one suffering from addiction. It is my hope that forums and events like this will keep these important conversations going to remind those here in our community who may be suffering that they are not alone, and that help and support are always available. I thank everyone who participated in the event for their willingness to help us end this terrible epidemic."

Overdoses in this year alone have already increased by 30%, and that number continues to rise. At the event, Dr. Newman pointed out that the introduction of fentanyl, a manufactured drug, has been a key contributor to that number, especially in preventable deaths. According to the Dutchess County Department of Behavioral and Community

Health, in 2016 43% of accidental overdose deaths included fentanyl, while only 3% involved it in 2010.

Lieutenant Frank LaMonica of the Dutchess County Sheriff's Office was also present to collect and safely dispose of unused or expired prescription medications. This effort to 'Shed the Meds' plays a key role in helping to get these drugs off of the streets and out of the hands of those struggling with addiction. For a list of medication drop boxes in Dutchess County, please click [here](#). For a list in Putnam County, please click [here](#).

Representatives from the Council on Addiction, Prevention, and Education (CAPE) were also on hand to answer questions and to talk with residents about the resources that they are offering throughout the county. For more information on their educational programs, please click [here](#).

The Change Your Thinking Change Your Life Foundation is a local nonprofit foundation focused on finding an individual's unique path to recovery. For more information, please visit <http://www.changeyourthinkingfoundation.com/>.

For more information on Narcan, or how to schedule your own free Narcan training, please contact the Dutchess County Department of Behavioral and Community Health by visiting their website, or by calling 845-486-3400.