



Opioid / Fentanyl Crisis and Probation

When asked to write this article, my first thought was: where do I even begin? The opioid/fentanyl crisis as a whole is a never-ending, gut-wrenching blow that affects all facets and members of the community. In my 18 years on the job as a probation officer, I never thought I would become so active and involved in the working efforts of having to keep my active probation clients alive. Within the last five to ten years, as the crisis peaked, I've received countless phone calls with the news, "Hey Brickhouse, I hate to call, but 'so and so' has overdosed and died." For me, many of those calls initially were about the adult clients who I'd formerly supervised for many years, and then the calls became about their children who I currently supervise. The realization that a whole generation of kids would not have their parents around to witness important milestones of their lives – from graduation to marriage and having children – is an unpleasant truth that for many is directly attributed to the opioid and fentanyl crisis. These tragedies, too, take a toll on each and every probation officer on so many different levels – and I am no exception.

It seems that most people think that probation officers are mechanical robots who have no emotions, and that all they focus on is sending people to jail. However, that is not the case at all. In fact, my job is quite the opposite. Probation officers in many areas of North Carolina live and work in small communities, if not in their own home towns, where everybody knows everybody. In these tight-knit communities, inevitably at some point, probation officers have experienced the loss of a loved one, a close friend, a pillar of the community, a person they don't know directly but have read about, and/or a client on their caseload. The crisis doesn't discriminate, and the emotions tied to this crisis don't stop because of what one does for a living. Each officer is invested in their caseload and strives to help those who struggle with addiction to the best of their ability.

In the height of the crisis, many felt this battle was going to be lost and even now, on some days, it still feels that way. While the war wages on, through the growth of community programs, local support, and the availability of Narcan, together we are making a difference. The souls who are victims to the crisis can utilize these resources to no longer experience a dark, lost cause-feel. Instead, we now see the growing light in them that has allowed them to slowly regain control over their lives. As the old saying goes, "It takes a village," and the village here in Dare County, to include probation, will continue to fight even for those who have no fight left in them.

SAVING LIVES TASK FORCE

The Initiative is a quarterly newsletter presented by the Saving Lives Task Force, the goal of this publication is to educate, inform and engage residents of Dare County.

- Our Task Force is a team of professionals and community members working toward the prevention of substance use disorders and the availability of effective treatment for all Dare county citizens in need of help.
- **Join us for our In-Person Meetings** on the 3rd Tuesday of every month at 2:00 pm.
- **For More Information** please contact Roxana Ballinger, Saving Lives Task Force Co-Chair, at 252.475.5619 or roxana.ballinger@darenc.gov.

savinglivesobx.com

facebook.com/savinglivesobx



Recovery Together

Thursday, April 18, 2024

Jennette's Pier
7223 S Virginia Dare Trl
Nags Head, NC 27959

11:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Join Dr. Stephen Loyd, a nationally recognized addiction medicine expert, as he describes his descent into opioid addiction and his rise from the abyss to live a life of service. Learn how "systems" overdose deaths happen and how they are preventable. Explore two of the markedly different treatment options in the United States. Examine the implications of drug policy in the criminal justice system.

"Addiction is not a moral failure. Addiction is treatable. Treatment works. People recover." - Stephen Loyd, MD

Target Audience: People who live and/or work in Dare and Currituck Counties. This includes nurses, peer support specialists, qualified professionals, community health workers, school counselors, substance use professionals, social workers, school-based personnel, care coordinators, other licensed health care workers, first responders, law enforcement, justice system, and community members.

ADA: 252-737-1018 or ada-coordinator@nc.ahec.edu

www.easternahec.net

Cross Roads OBX MAIN EVENT

Liberty Fellowship Church
April 12, 2024

"The Main Event" is Cross Roads' annual fundraiser which will feature a sit down dinner, great fellowship, and excellent speakers. Cross Roads' desire is to bring awareness and understanding of those suffering in our community. There is no ticket to purchase, only an invitation is needed. For more event information, please visit our website at crossroadsobx.org or call 252-455-2510.



THE INITIATIVE Resources:

savinglivesobx.com

PORT/New Horizons
2808 S Croatan Hwy,
Nags Head, NC 27959
252.441.2324

Trillium Health Resources
www.trilliumncaccesspoint.org
877.685.2415 – 24 Hours a Day

Mobile Crisis Team
24 Hours a Day / 7 Days a Week
866.437.1821

**Suicide &
Crisis Lifeline**
988lifeline.org
or call or text 988

Syringe Services Program
Community Care Clinic of Dare
M-Th | 9 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
252.261.3041

Contact your insurance company to find out more information on local providers and your plan's benefits.



EVENTS & RESOURCES

- Recovery & Overdose Support Services (ROSS)**
 Recovery and Overdose Support Services (ROSS) provides support groups, harm reduction education and resources, overdose response, and assistance with recovery planning.
Katy Haslar, PSS, 252.473.7861
or Jesse Ruby PSS, 475-7923
RecoveryServices@DareNC.gov
- SMART Recovery OBX Addiction Support Group**
 When: Mondays, 6-7 pm for 60 minutes
 Where: The Studio at 3022 S. Croatan Hwy., Nags Head, NC
Facilitators: Scott and Katy Haslar,
smartrecoveryobx@gmail.com
- Alcoholics Anonymous: Meetings 7 days a week.**
 Visit the website AAOBX.com for current virtual meeting schedule. **Outer Banks AA Hotline 252-256-0850** and <https://aobx.com/>
- Outer Banks Alateen, Outer Banks Alateen Meeting, Saturdays, 10-11 am, Kitty Hawk Baptist Church, email alateen@alanonobx.com for information.**
 Alateen is a fellowship of young people whose lives have been affected by alcoholism in a family member or friend.
- OBX Nar-anon** is a means of coping with the insanity brought about from having a family member or friend struggling with addiction.
For more details, please contact Holly Henry West at 252-489-7778.
- Women of Worth**
 Groups are being held virtually on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00 am-12:00 pm. The groups will focus on recovery from the evidence-based curriculum, "Helping Women Recover."
Please contact Catisha Bryant at catisha.bryant@darenc.gov for more information or if you would like to join.
- Breaking Through Task Force, 2nd Tuesday of the month, 8:30 am**
 The Breaking Through Task Force is composed of community members who wish to address communication and stigma concerns about mental health conditions and substance use disorders.
Contact Kelly.Nettin@darenc.gov
www.breakthestigmaobx.com
- Dare Community Collaborative, 2nd Tuesday every other month, 2-3 pm virtually.**
 A partnership among providers and families of youth and adults with mental health issues and/or substance use issues.
Contact Susan Hall at: Susan.Hall@trilliumnc.org
- Weekly Recovery Group**
Thursdays, Starting May 25th from 2:30-3:45 pm
 The meetings will be facilitated by our Peer Support Specialists and will include the SMART Recovery program combined with Wellness Recovery Action Planning (WRAP). These groups are free and open to participants of the **Syringe Services Program**, Community Care Clinic of Dare clinic patients, and community members.
For more information, email us at RecoveryServices@darenc.gov
- Crossroads OBX**
 Crossroads OBX is Christ-centered outreach offering discernment, guidance and objective planning for those who desire to change the course of their lives and help those who have been thrown off course by homelessness, addiction, incarceration or other events.
For more information contact 252.455.2510, crossroadsobx.org or crossroadsobx@gmail.com



Good Samaritan Law Interview

with Attorney Jenny Wells

The Good Samaritan Law (NCGS 90-96.2) was passed in 2013 in North Carolina. This law came into effect with progressive intentions, however there have been few adaptations over the years. As expected, the substances that are causing overdose have evolved. Attorney Jennifer Wells provides us with more insight about what the Good Samaritan Law is, and what it looks like 11 years later.

Q: What's your name and what do you do?

A: My name is Jennifer Wells, and I am an Assistant Public Defender for Dare County. I will have been practicing law with the Public Defender's office for 10 years in March of 2024. The Public Defender's office practices criminal law for those who do not have the financial resources to hire an attorney, and are granted a court appointed attorney.

Q: What is the Good Samaritan Law?

A: It is a law passed to keep people who report an overdose from criminal liability. It protects the person reporting the overdose, and the person overdosing. The purpose would be to encourage people to seek immediate medical attention for overdoses, and not worry about being prosecuted for the use or possession of substances.

Q: What are some faults of this law?

A: The main fault I've found is within section (C)3, which specifically lists what offenses would be covered. The statute provides coverage of misdemeanor drug violations and drug paraphernalia. However, it doesn't cover fentanyl, which is the one of the leading substances that people are overdosing on. In fact, it doesn't cover any of the newer substances that have been proven to cause overdoses. Also, as it stands currently, it does not protect bystanders on the scene of an overdose from legal liability.

Q: What are ways in which this policy can be enhanced to better serve its purpose?

A: Simply, it could expand the substances that are provided protection from criminal liability. The Good Samaritan Law could eliminate the parameters of permissible substances. The drugs that are causing overdoses are forever changing, and policy will never be able to keep up with a conclusive list.

Additionally, bystanders should be under the same protections of those calling 911. Fear of potential charges may make those in the vicinity of an overdose reluctant to reach out for immediate medical attention.

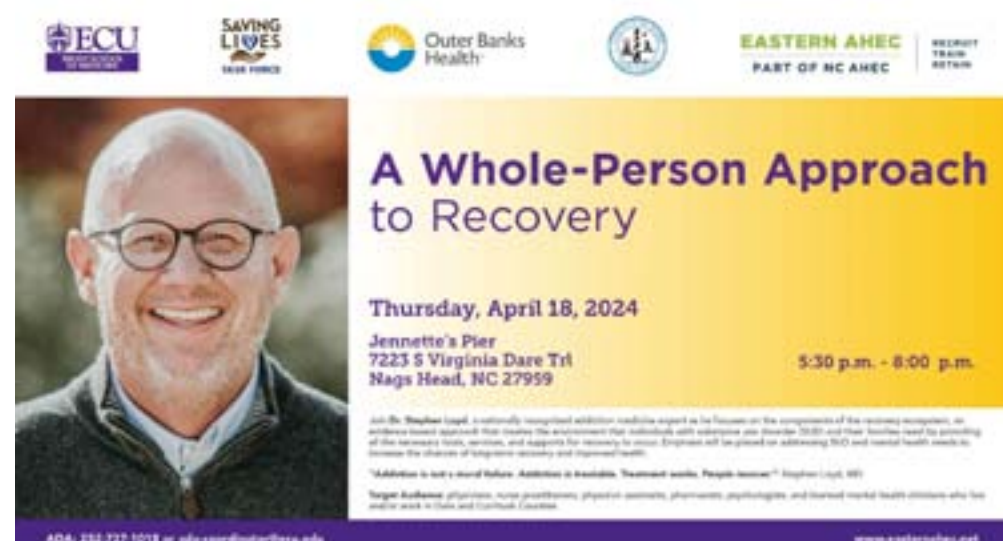
Q: Are there any additional points that you want to add?


A: People should know that the Good Samaritan Law provides immunity against prosecution with probation or parole, if you're the one overdosing or reporting the overdose. This means that seeking medical attention for an overdose cannot count against your probation or parole.

Also, people are not familiar with NCGS 90-113.22, which is cited in the Good Samaritan Law. Section C reads that if you disclose to law enforcement that you have hypodermic needles prior to a search, you are protected from prosecution from the needles. You are still liable for other substances, but not the needles or residual substance from the needles. This is a measure taken to ensure officer safety when conducting searches.

And lastly, a lot of people who I represent don't know that they have the right to say no to law enforcement. It's your right to respectfully refuse searches and field sobriety tests. Without a warrant being presented, you can say, "I'm sorry, I do not consent to a police search." Know your rights.

In summary, the Good Samaritan Law has the potential to save more lives. The enactment of this law over a decade ago is evidence that our legislators have prioritized human lives and safety. What is important moving forward, is to be adaptable to the continual changes in society.





A Whole-Person Approach to Recovery

Thursday, April 18, 2024

Jennette's Pier
 7223 S Virginia Dare Trl
 Nags Head, NC 27959

5:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Join Dr. Heather Lloyd, nationally recognized addiction specialist as he focuses on the components of the recovery ecosystem, an evidence-based approach that creates the environment that individuals with substance use disorder (SUD) and their families need to bring about the recovery, stability, and support for recovery to occur. Emphasis will be placed on addressing SUD and mental health needs, to increase the chance of long-term recovery and improved health.

*Additional in-person and virtual sessions available. Treatment available. People's Choice!™ (Heather Lloyd, MD)

Target Audience: physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, pharmacists, psychologists, and licensed mental health clinicians who will work in Dare and Currituck Counties.

ADA: 252-727-1018 or ada.coordinator@ecu.edu www.easterntechec.net