

THE INITIATIVE

Addressing Substance Abuse in Dare County



Fall 2017
Vol. 01 Issue 02



Is Effective Prevention the Key to Safe, Healthy and Happy Communities?

In our community and across the nation, substance abuse is a pervasive and devastating issue impacting our families, health and children. Substance use disorders cut across racial, socio-economic, geographic, gender and generational lines. Drug deaths now outnumber traffic-related deaths. In North Carolina, six out of ten emergency department visits for young people are overdose related. The number of babies born in America with opiate drug withdrawal has tripled in the past decade. The need for substance abuse prevention is clear.

Is substance abuse prevention the responsibility of parents, youth, prevention professionals, local government, or schools? The answer is yes- everyone. Each sector and individual plays a part in creating a safe and healthy community and reducing risk associated with substance abuse.

Some of the most effective programs in prevention never mention alcohol or drugs, but look to build individual and community assets that provide a buffer against risk factors. Prevention efforts should seek to address individual behavior and environmental/community change. There is an analogy used in the prevention field, "Holding young people solely

Continued on Page 2

SAVING LIVES



TASK FORCE

*A Quarterly Newsletter Presented
By The Saving Lives Task Force*

■ About the Task Force

The Saving Lives 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.

The goal of this newsletter is to educate, inform and engage the citizens of Dare County in this effort.

■ For More Information

on this newsletter or the Saving Lives Task Force, please contact Roxana Ballinger, Co-Chair, at 252.475.5619 or roxana.ballinger@darenc.com.

savinglivesobx.com

S M T W T F S

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Ongoing Events

- Alcoholic Anonymous - District 93**
3rd Wednesday of each month |
7 PM | Grace By The Sea
Lutheran Church
 4212 S Croatan Hwy., Nags Head, NC 27959
 Outer Banks AA Hotline:
 (252) 256-0850
 www.aaobx.com
- NAR-ANON | Every Thursday**
7:00 pm | Source Church in
Manteo
 The NAR-ANON program is a means of coping with the insanity brought about from having a family member or friend struggling with addiction. (AL-ANON Family groups are suggested for relative and families of those who suffer from the disease of alcoholism). For more details, please contact Debbie at 703-402-3501.

October 2017

- Hatteras Island Town Hall**
October 24, 2017 | Doors Open
for Resource Tables at 5:30 PM |
Program starts at 6:00 PM
 This is the 4th of the Dare County Town Hall Series. Hatteras Civic Center. The Town Hall offers a welcoming format and is a great opportunity for residents to learn more about the substance abuse issues in Dare County and become familiar with local resources currently available to help those in need.



Partner Spotlight:

Triple P (Positive Parenting Program)

A system of education and support for parents and caregivers of toddlers to teens, Triple P is backed by more than 280 studies. The program gives parents the proven skills needed to manage everyday challenges of raising children, as well as more complex problems, including mental health and substance use – so kids can not only survive but thrive.

The Triple P “Stay Positive” campaign is a universal communications strategy to raise awareness of parenting issues and destigmatize asking for parenting assistance. Because parents have different needs, Triple P has many different ways to get help. From one-time seminars to ongoing courses, from brief parenting advice to more intensive help, parents choose what is best for their families. Triple P is also available 24/7 online, FREE to NC parents...on their schedule...at their pace... where they choose!

Parenting has a profound influence on all aspects of child development, with potential for reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors that influence ability to cope with life challenges, including adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). When children grow up in a loving, safe, consistent, and low conflict environment with clear boundaries and limits, they are better adjusted and more likely to succeed at school, in relationships, and in life. Building parental ability to self-regulate

decreases parental stress and depression as well as children’s vulnerability to child maltreatment/ injuries and emotional and behavioral problems.

Triple P works in a variety of settings with a diverse range of practitioners and target populations. Sara Sampson, Family Support Manager at Children & Youth Partnership for Dare County (CYP), coordinates collaborative efforts with Dare County Health and Human Services, Dare County Schools, OBX Therapy, Outer Banks Inner Journey, PORT/New Horizons, and three early child care programs. Currently, 26 practitioners across these agencies are trained and available to offer various levels of Triple P to local families.

For more information, contact Sara Sampson at (252)441-0614. To register for an online course, visit www.darekids.org and click on the Triple P link on the home page.

“The single most important thing we can do to prevent serious behavioral and emotional problems and abuse of children is to help parents in the most important job in the world, raising the next generation,”

asserts Matt Sanders, Founder of Triple P.



Is Effective Prevention the Key? Continued from Cover

responsible for underage drinking is like holding fish responsible for dying in a polluted stream.” We must seek to empower and educate individuals, while also working to change the environment to create more protection and less risk.

Environmental prevention is based on the fact that people’s behavior, including their use of substances, is powerfully shaped by their environment. This includes: the availability of substances, the messages and images delivered by the mass media, the norms of their communities/social groups, and so forth. Effective prevention requires appropriately modifying the physical, legal, economic, and socio-cultural processes of the community at large that contribute to substance abuse and related problems (Holder, 1999). Because environmental management affects whole populations and creates changes in the fundamental system, it can potentially bring about dramatic and enduring reductions in substance abuse problems over time. (Edwards et al., 1994). Environmental prevention seeks to bring about behavior change through multiple channels, both promoting positive behaviors and norms and also discouraging high-risk behaviors.

Environment prevention is a large part of Dare CASA’s community prevention plan. Strategies to reduce access and the availability of drugs and alcohol to youth are a focus for the coalition. Traditional prevention and education are still paramount with an overall effective

prevention plan. DHHS and our local schools facilitate a Peer Power program in the classroom that educates students on alcohol and other drugs while teaching students to become peer mentors for younger students. Using a course to teach kids about drugs is not enough; and we know this. The classroom education, follow-up, peer support, positive parental expectations and guidelines, and a healthy and safe environment are ALL key prevention elements.

Strategies aimed at reducing youth substance abuse are often correlated with reductions in youth violence and



other risky behaviors. Teens need a positive personal support network and that can be supported with many systems involving not only peers, but through community resources, schools, prevention partners, coaches and of course parents. Dare CASA directs some efforts toward advocacy and legislative issues that promote policies for overall public health; the complexities of that work are apparent, but important. Equally important are the less “complex” strategies that can be even more meaningful in prevention efforts for our kids: having dinner together, taking a child to their sports practice, fostering confidence and kindness, increasing a child’s connectedness to their school, and building skills. It ALL counts and it all matters. There are many organizations and resources that offer services for adults, parents and youth in Dare County. The Saving Lives Taskforce is working to connect these resources to anyone in the community with need.

Saving Lives Task Force Advocacy

On June 29, 2017, Governor Roy Cooper signed the Strengthen Opioid Misuse Prevention (STOP) Act. With Dare County residents Brenda Thacker and Donnie Varnell in the audience, Governor Cooper stated "With this legislation and the new State Opioid Plan, we're taking important first steps to stem the opioid epidemic," The STOP Act was passed unanimously by both chambers of the North Carolina General Assembly.

Donnie Varnell, former head of the State Bureau of Investigation's Diversion and Environmental Crimes Unit and current investigator with the Dare County Sheriff's Office, stated the passage of the STOP Act demonstrates "awareness of the problem at the highest levels."

Key aspects of the STOP Act are:

- Tightening supervision and improving oversight of opioid prescriptions
- Requiring prescribers and pharmacies to check the Controlled Substance Reporting System (CSRS) before prescribing opioids to patients. According to Varnell "I believe that the mandatory use of the CSRS by practitioners is paramount. We have had the CSRS since 2007 and have never had better than mediocre use of the system by those that prescribe. Not only will this improve the care for patients but hopefully will curtail to some degree the diversion of medications by "doctor shoppers."
- Mandating a five-day limit on initial prescriptions for acute pain, with exemptions for chronic pain, cancer care, palliative care, hospice care, or medication-assisted treatment for substance use disorders
- Increasing access to naloxone which can reverse opioid overdose. In Dare County, naloxone is available from the Dare County Health Department, SOURCE Church, and the Dare Coalition Against Substance Abuse (CASA). It can also be purchased without a prescription from local pharmacies.

- Permitting local governments to support needle exchange programs. The Dare County Commissioners have supported a needle exchange program administered by SOURCE Church.

Brenda Thacker, Co-Founder of Walk Against Addiction, said "It was important for me to attend the signing of the STOP Act ceremony with Gov. Roy Cooper as I believe we MUST take action to stop this epidemic. With help from Naloxone, a syringe exchange program, and evidence based recovery programs, we can begin to help to lower the death rate of those dying from this disease." Both Varnell and Thacker are members of the Saving Lives Task Force.

For the full text of House Bill 243 Strengthen Opioid Misuse Prevention (STOP) Act go to the ncleg.net, the website for the North Carolina General Assembly.



North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper signs the Strengthen Opioid Misuse Prevention (STOP) Act on June 29, 2017.

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

2-1-1 Directory
www.nc211.org

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