

HEALTHY SUSSEX QUARTERLY

October 2022

Coming Together for a Healthy Sussex County

CREATING CONDITIONS FOR HEALTH IS A COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY



Everyone knows the phrase: “Without your health you have nothing,” and yet what does that mean to a community. The World Health Organization defines health as: “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being—not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Coalitions, like SCHC, have previously been criticized that we are often too broad in our work, and many would prefer us to cling to a narrower version of health—one rooted in biological basis. Our health, though, is often significantly impacted by our environment, living conditions and economic status. We are only as healthy as our ecosystems. The conditions of our community, homes and body are all interrelated. People who eat well and exercise have been known to die from a heart attack, if under tremendous stress, and others deteriorate from loneliness. This issue we call “health” is often complex, and our solutions as a society need to be resilient, innovation and contextual.

There are some foundational health basics that we need, at a minimum; that includes: access to healthcare, the ability to understand the information around your health and its’ care, as well as how we address health concerns—such as access to quality care and the funding to pay for it. These three basic foundations do not exist for all of us and are most certainly not built to be equitable. Geography and resources play a significant role in health outcomes in Kent and Sussex County. Our capacity to serve our growing health needs as well as

shifting populations is strained at best.



In 2023-2026 Sussex County Health Coalition will focus on access to care, health literacy and health navigation through building a pipeline for Community Health Workers in Sussex County.

These strategic initiatives are about capacity, advocacy and partner engagement and alignment all are areas our Board identified as priorities. These, like the definition of health, are far too broad—but so are our coalition’s partnerships, and its understanding of our health landscape and its complexity. Sussex County Health Coalition does not exist to address only one health need. We exist to identify areas of need. We exist to draw attention to those needs. We exist to align resources around those needs, and we exist to create the dialogue and information to work together towards solutions. We can ask, is a health collaborative relevant? I will point back to my opening statement:

“Without your health you have nothing!”

In this Quarterly Newsletter, we highlight several articles of the work we support, and thank you for all you do in your support of us and each other!

Peggy M. Geisler, Executive Director

SCHC MISSION

The Sussex County Health Coalition exists to engage the entire community in collaborative family-focused effort to improve the health of children, youth and families in Sussex County.



SCHC VISION

We envision a community in which our citizens and institutions (public, private, and not-for-profit) are actively engaged in community health promotion as a shared community good, and working together to create a cultural and physical environment which supports healthy lifestyles for our children and their families.

SEAFORD COMMUNITY OF HOPE PROGRAM (SCOH) EXPANSION

The SCOH is on track with its seven-year objective to establish up to three FRCs in underserved neighborhoods in Seaford. We are currently underway with expanding our reach into another subsidized housing community. A mini-grant from Healthy Communities Delaware will fund costs to complete a Neighborhood Needs Assessment in Seaford's Chandler Heights Apartments.

The proposed HCD funding aims to lay the groundwork for our next objective: deeper engagement in a second neighborhood. Community partners have prioritized both Meadowbridge and Chandler Heights for their high crime rates, violence, community instability, and disengagement.

According to the Seaford Police Department, these two apartment complexes are perennially top "hot spots" for service calls that impact health and safety. As such, they need positive, strength-based, trauma-informed, culturally competent engagement—practices deeply embedded in Children and Families First's projects and services. Learnings from working with families at Meadowbridge demonstrate that the timeline to develop rapport and trust with residents and to secure agreements for place-based work is likely to be a yearlong investment—one that would benefit significantly from a process that intentionally involves neighbors in improvement projects developed from within.

The top priority for this grant is to support place-based projects in communities experiencing the most significant inequities, mobilize residents with lived experience and cross-sector collaborations, and strengthen vital conditions of health that people and communities need to thrive. Through SCOH's partnership with Sussex County Health Coalition, we will leverage the SCHC's committee structure to coordinate discussions with stakeholders and partners who have provided focused efforts at Meadowbridge and Chandler Heights apartments to learn and build support for the current project. We have identified the following goals and objectives for year one.



GOAL 1

IN COLLABORATION WITH NEIGHBORS LIVING IN CHANDLER HEIGHTS:

Engage residents in neighborhood strengths and needs assessment.

Identify one or more physical neighborhood projects that improve community conditions and support healthy behavior.

Develop actionable plans to complete the neighborhood project/s that could be implemented in the following year.

GOAL 1 OBJECTIVES:

- Engage up to 25% of households through outreach activities.
- Gather information about the neighborhood's strengths and needs from up to 15% of households.
- Produce a neighborhood strength and needs assessment report with at least one actionable neighborhood project idea.



GOAL 2

INNOVATE, COLLABORATE, AND INTEGRATE TO IMPROVE THE WELL-BEING OF FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES.

GOAL 1 OBJECTIVE:

Build neighborhood-driven, neighborhood-focused collaborations to enhance well-being.

OUTCOMES:

- Increase resident awareness and participation in community transformation work.
- Neighbor engagement throughout the grant period: in outreach, activities/events, and assessment.
- Improvements in vital conditions for well-being.

We anticipate that the Chandler Heights neighborhood strengths and needs assessment will yield diverse ideas. During the engagement and assessment phase of the proposed project, we envision using that information to guide SCOH-wide and neighborhood-specific program development. For the proposed project, we expect to collaborate with neighbors to hone in on one or more physical projects appropriate for a planning grant to improve the physical community and support healthy behaviors.

For example, lighting reduces the risk of violence and crime; a school bus shelter that supports safety, health, and school attendance; or a community garden, playground, or walking path that supports healthy behaviors.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

SCHC is proud to announce a recent award of a \$3 million/3 year grant in partnership with the federal government, DHSS, and UWDE to provide over 100 new CHWs (Community Health Workers) for Sussex and Kent counties.

SCHC led the grant application process to provide a pathway for economic and workforce development and formal "certification" for the role of the community health worker for our communities most in need of healthcare support. The award is an opportunity for workers in these communities to enter the healthcare workforce and receive financial support during both the training and apprenticeship process to ensure final placement in the area's largest health systems and community-based organizations desperately in need of state certified CHWs.

Stay tuned for a social media, email, and public service media blitz to promote the role of the CHW, and how to enroll in the free CHW training programs that will be offered in our area.



For more information please contact
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USING OUR PERSONAL INFLUENCE ON REDUCING ADDICTION IN THE COMMUNITY

How often are you intentionally using your power of influence to cause a better world for the people right around you?



When we think of influential people we might think of celebrities or politicians or thought leaders who seem to be shaping the world as we know it, however, when it comes to the beliefs of those people that you care for in your everyday life, YOU indeed do have a great amount of influence. You are the "influencer" to your family and friends.

If each of us realized the power of our own personal influence on those around us and began intentionally using that power on a frequent basis, we could influence each other towards healthier and happier lives.

One social issue in which personal influence can be very impactful, is in the work to reduce drug and alcohol abuse and addiction. Chances are by statistics, most people reading this newsletter know somebody who has experienced or is experiencing addiction. However, one does not need to know a person experiencing addiction to be a helpful part of the solution!

The issue of addiction is vast and will need a multi-faceted community approach to solve, but as we individuals are part of the community, here are a few ideas on what our roles can be, why it is important that we act, and a look at a statewide campaign that is helping youth to realize their power to influence to their peers.

WHAT CAN ONE PERSON DO?

Often the size of the issue is so overwhelming that we don't even think to start working on it, or we question if we can make a difference at all. The truth is every action makes a difference. Think of each action or effort, as a brick in a house that you are building. Placing one brick on one day will not build a house. However, if you place bricks frequently or better yet get your friends to help place bricks the house can be built faster. So what are the "bricks" when it comes to actions that use your influence to reduce addiction? Here are 3 quick ideas:

- **Starting conversations at home, work and even with your peers.** You do not need to know the answers to start simple conversations such as, "Have you heard there are a lot of drug overdoses reported in Delaware?" or "Do you know anyone who uses pills that aren't prescribed to them? The point is to bring the issue into light so it can begin to be dissected and discussed.

- **Sharing a social media post.** It can be facts about addiction, or resources of where to get help, or even words of encouragement to inspire people towards healthy lifestyles. To find facts or resources to post with local information, there are plenty of facts and resources located at www.HelpIsHereDE.com including the latest information about Narcan and Fentanyl.
- **Be civically engaged.** For those with a strong passion to help and who are willing to go above and beyond the conversations and social media posts there are plenty of ways to get involved in the community efforts to reduce drug addiction including attending a Narcan training, bringing old prescription drugs to drop off centers to safely dispose, attending one of many prevention themed events throughout the state including the great events hosted by SCHC such as last summer's Rockin' For Recovery!

THE IMPORTANCE OF DESTIGMATIZING THE CONVERSATION ABOUT DRUGS AND ADDICTION

With 1 Delawarean dying from an opioid overdose every 22 hours we have a serious health crisis occurring.

Addiction is a disease, but one that currently can have a stigma attached to it. This stigma makes it so that people who need help are not seeking it due to the fear of being ashamed or embarrassed. There is a deadly entity in our state that is not only killing a Delawarean a day but also affecting many more families, and impacting the workforce, yet we are afraid to speak about it. We therefore are allowing it to spread like a wildfire we hope will vanish by simply looking the other way. It won't vanish without our efforts.

There are people in the dark, people we know and love, and the light at the end of their tunnel can be us if we can only begin to use our influence to destigmatize addiction. That can start with a simple post on social media, or a conversation. Make it clear to your network of family members, friends and peers, that you will not judge them for experiencing addiction so that they can walk towards that light and get the help they need. The more effort you make, the more light you shine.

MYREASONWHYDE ART CHALLENGE

Sussex County Health Coalition selected the winners for the #MyReasonWhyDE Art Challenge contest and awarded \$1800 in prizes.

The #MyReasonWhyDE Art Challenge was designed to involve children, from Kindergarten through High School, to educate the nation's youth on the dangers of substance abuse. The art contest is an activity that not only helps to ensure the health and well-being of our residents but also goes a long way toward maintaining a positive public perception of your property and community.

Over 100 entries were judged on the artist's ability to create a submission with the contest theme. The general purpose of the program is to promote a world without substance use from the perspective of the artist.



Dayanara Flores, McKean High School

Selina Mosley, Phyllis Wheatley

Adrianna Mosley, Woodbridge Middle

Jaidence Thomas, Lulu Ross

Aiden White, Mispillion



Marshay Brown, Milford Central

Tylashia Davis, Mispillion

Raalyin Mosley, Banneker

Maliyah Mosley, Phyllis Wheatley

Kathaleen Sledge, Milford High



Darek Austin, Lake Forest East

ma'Syah Davis, Mispillion

Avion Ratinquez, Milford High

Jasmin Sauce, McKean High School

Briella Stone, Mispillion



Adrianna Mosley



Jaidence Thomas



Aiden White

KIM JONES STORY

I've been in recovery for just over 10.5 years, and I can still remember with vivid accuracy the times in my life when I couldn't even manage to stay sober for 10 days.



I try not to think about those times too often. Mostly because the memories are so unpleasant. That's kind of an understatement. The memories are too much to bear sometimes. It's really easy to go down the rabbit hole and think about all the mistakes I made, the people I hurt, the horrible things that happened to me, and the time I spent praying

for my own death because it seemed like the only possible way to stop the pain I was feeling. I even thought my death would end the suffering I was causing my parents and kids. That's what addiction can do, essentially strip a person of their humanity and leave them a hopeless shell of a person. At least that's what it did to me.

I'm frequently asked how someone like me ended up being addicted to alcohol and drugs. They see me as the person I am now and have a hard time imagining what went wrong. I usually just give a short answer, doing my best to change the subject and avoid personal disclosures. Something along the lines of, "The same way everyone else does—it's never really just one thing, is it?" In my early recovery it was important, critical even, that I discovered the answer to that question. How exactly did I end up being addicted to drugs and alcohol? It wasn't like that was ever an aspiration of mine. No one really has a life goal of becoming a homeless addict, cut off entirely from their family and friends. Yet that was exactly what I had become. I used to talk about it pretty openly. I would share my experiences and the things that I believe led me to using alcohol and drugs to cope with my feelings and life situation. But all of that feels less important to share as time goes on.

It's not that I'm worried about being judged or anything like that. Addicts, whether in recovery or not, deal with stigma and judgment all the time. I'm not a stranger to it and I don't shy away from it or try to avoid it. But I'd much rather focus my time and efforts on figuring out ways to help

people. It seems way more useful than explaining how I became an addict. It's certainly way more useful than sitting back and judging people who are still in active addiction or who are having a hard time in their recovery. Early on in my recovery I knew I needed to be a helper. I wanted to make sure I was making a difference in the lives of others, so I began volunteering in the community and working in the drug and alcohol treatment field. Working in various roles ranging from a volunteer peer to managing multiple Delaware treatment programs for a large agency provided me with opportunities to help on many levels.

I've been to too many funerals to count, and I've seen the devastation that addiction causes in families and in our communities. But I've also had the privilege of seeing individuals rebuild their lives, reunify with their families, and truly thrive in their recovery.

And that's why I continue to work in this field. It's why I continually seek opportunities to educate others about addiction, to provide a path for individuals in recovery to rebuild their lives, and to help provide high quality and ethical resources for those in need. I know not everyone will be supportive of the person I am and the work I do, and I know that stigma will continue to rear its ugly head. For me, that just means my work isn't done and that I need to continue to provide help and hope to those who need it most.



Kim Jones has recently been appointed to Deputy Director of Community Collaboration of Delaware (CCD), a nonprofit organization committed to making a positive community impact while helping others succeed. Kim's shared passion for community service led her to develop CCD's CARE Program (Community Advocacy & Recovery Empowerment) which provides structured and supportive recovery housing for men and women with substance use disorders. In her new role, Kim will also oversee CCD's youth programming and prevention services as well as assist with the organization's community service and outreach initiatives.



Jimmy Hoppa, WBOC



Chief Marshall Craft
Seaford Police Department



Scott Michels



With Special Thanks to
Rick Stoakley & Annie Hearn

SCHC PROUDLY THANKS
OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS
FOR THEIR SUPPORT!



PLATINUM



DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES



GOLD

United Way of Delaware
The Vault
Sussex County Council
Delaware First Health
American Lung Association
of Delaware

SILVER

SUN Behavioral
Discover Bank
Mental Health Association of
Delaware
Dover Behavioral Health System
GRAIL
RI International

COMMUNITY

We Work For Health
Aloysius Butler & Clark
CSC