

While it may seem as if we just launched the Seaford Goes Purple campaign a short time ago, it is already time to gear up again in support of this important initiative for Fall 2019.

**This robust awareness campaign aims to:**

- Reduce stigma around addiction
- Create awareness of the importance of prevention education
- Make community members aware of where, when and how to seek treatment
- Support those in recovery on their journey.

Equally as important is sharing information around the potential dangers of prescription drugs and empowering community members to be bold and ask questions about what they are taking and what non-addicting alternatives are available to them.

The **PURPLE CAMPAIGN** began last August as a small city-wide initiative in Seaford. Legislators, city officials, family members, churches, Nanticoke Hospital and many, many businesses eagerly joined the campaign in support of their own. **PURPLE** flags were flying in Seaford, **PURPLE** mums were planted, signs arose everywhere throughout the town! Seaford

# DELAWARE Goes PURPLE

was nascent in its efforts to go purple when the entire county of Sussex jumped on board! A short time later, Kent County and the Vines Community Project joined the effort. This year, we are pleased to announce that New Castle County has joined **PROJECT PURPLE** making this a state-wide initiative! **DELAWARE IS GOING PURPLE!**

This year's campaign kicked off with a "soft-launch" at the Day of Hope event in June held in Georgetown, Delaware featuring Dr. Gilbert Botvin, Dr. Julius Mullen and Dr. James Walsh. This will be followed up by a special community event featuring former NBA player, and addict in recovery, Chris Herren.

That event is scheduled for October 9, 2019 at Delaware State University in Dover. All are welcome to attend this event. Mr. Herren will then speak the following day to our Middle and High School students in Sussex County.

Get creative, challenge others to join the effort and let's move those mountains... let's support our communities on their road to healing, hope and recovery!

**We hope to see you wearing purple in September and October!**

**Are you ready to join the purple campaign? Ask about our PURPLE PLEDGE CARD and commit to taking part!**

## THE IMPORTANCE OF LITERACY



Strong reading skills are the backbone for learning in all school subjects which is why it is so critical to develop early literacy skills in young children. Developing language skills early will help set a child on the right path for their academic journey.

### WHY?

Children introduced to reading early on tend to read earlier and excel in school compared to children who are not exposed to language and books at a young age (American Academy of Pediatrics). Reading, rhyming, singing, and talking, beginning from birth, profoundly influence literacy and language development, the foundations for all other learning (healthychildren.org). Developing early literacy skills makes it easier for children to learn to read. Children who enter school with these skills have an advantage that carries with them throughout their school years.

Reading is an essential skill for success in school and later in life. Yet, the American Academy of Pediatrics reports more than 1 in 3 American children start Kindergarten without the skills they need to learn to read.

This puts them academically behind before even entering their first formal year of school. Working to make up this difference is challenging at best, which is why the Sussex County Health Coalition, United Way of Delaware and over thirty other stakeholders are gathering quarterly to look critically at what services are available for our children and who are at risk for entering school significantly behind. This requires looking closely at prenatal services for expecting mothers to secure a health start. It also involves ensuring that children and families have access to regular developmental screenings, a plethora of quality books in the home, and that every child is regularly read to one-on-one. These are just a few of the important recommendations to establishing a healthy and successful start for Delaware's children. We know this is critical not only for our children, but for our nation at large.

If you would like to join our Literacy Work Group, please email us at [schcadmin@pmgconsulting.net](mailto:schcadmin@pmgconsulting.net) we would love to have you at the table.

# Healthy Sussex QUARTERLY

COMING TOGETHER FOR A HEALTHY SUSSEX COUNTY

July 2019

## ADDRESSING THE MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS OF OUR YOUTH IN 2019!

### AN ESTIMATED 20% OF CHILDREN NATIONWIDE STRUGGLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES!

An estimated 20% of children nationwide struggle with mental health issues. As awareness grows, the need for early detection through a child's school, primary care physician, and parent are paramount for early intervention and support and can play the leading role in establishing a plan of care. Research shows that one in five children will struggle with a mental health illness by the age of 12. For Sussex County, this means that close to 8,000 children may be at risk and need support. Currently, we are ill equipped to ensure that our youth who are struggling with mental health issues are identified and referred for treatment and/or support.

A recent survey by the American Academy of Pediatrics revealed that only 47% of primary care physicians feel comfortable screening for and diagnosing mental illness. Other literature shows that schools, who are often on the front line, do not have the training and support needed to recognize issues and refer students. In addition, parents frequently believe puberty is the root cause of many of their child's behavioral issues. This assumption may or may not be true. Often, we make excuses why others may seem anxious or depressed or just not acting like themselves. If these conditions persist, we need to ensure intervention and access to help.

The Sussex County Health Coalition understands that our youth are continually inundated with social media and peer influences. Additionally, consistent and frequent exposure to adult life concerns, a result of growing and advanced technology, can overshadow our children's existence. This, coupled with a dwindling number of quality relationships, insufficient down time, and weak interpersonal skills, leaves our children vulnerable as they try to navigate advanced life

situations without a strong support system. We, (as the adults in their lives: Teachers, Doctors, Mentors, Coaches, Youth leaders and Parents) need to learn the signs and be prepared to provide help by providing clear boundaries, quality and relevant supports and interactions that help our youth mitigate and adapt to their unique stressors.

It is important to know the signs of mental illness issues, which include:

- Irritability
- Change in mood and behavior
- Lack of interest or sadness
- Drug or alcohol use
- Withdrawal
- Isolation and more

To learn more about the warning signs, go to [hhs.gov/ash/oah/adolescent-development/mental-health/how-adults-can-support-adolescent-mental-health/resources/index.html](https://hhs.gov/ash/oah/adolescent-development/mental-health/how-adults-can-support-adolescent-mental-health/resources/index.html)

If you are concerned about the Mental Health condition of a youth living in Delaware, visit Help is Here Delaware at [helpisherede.com](https://helpisherede.com)

We need to work to end the stigma associated with mental health and support our children and families in ways that promote healing. We are stronger together; let's stand united in this effort.

**Peggy Geisler, Executive Director**  
Sussex County Health Coalition

### 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.



**SAVE THE DATE!**

THE HERREN PROJECT  
**PROJECT PURPLE**  
initiative

*stand up against substance abuse*



The THP Project Purple Initiative is an anti-substance use campaign of The Herren Project, a non-profit foundation established by former NBA basketball player, Chris Herren that assists individuals and families struggling with addiction. The THP Project Purple initiative was launched to break the stigma of addiction, bring awareness to the dangers of substance abuse and encourage positive decision making to navigate life's challenges.

**WHO:**

**CHRIS HERREN**  
Former NBA Player

**WHAT:**

Come hear Chris share his story from addiction and loss, to recovery and hope.

**WHERE:**

Delaware State University  
Dover, Delaware

**WHEN:**

Wednesday,  
October 9, 2019  
7 p.m.

For more information: [lcoldiron@pmgconsulting.net](mailto:lcoldiron@pmgconsulting.net)

## DELAWARE AFTERSCHOOL NETWORK (DEAN) ENGAGEMENT BEFORE AND AFTER THE SCHOOL BELL RINGS

The hours after school can be full of risk. These are the hours when juvenile crime, victimization and drug use peak—and many caregivers are still at work. Support for afterschool is overwhelming and demand is growing. Nationwide, 9 in 10 adults say afterschool programs are important to their community—and more than 19 million kids are waiting to get in. Every day in Delaware, nearly 30,000 school-age children and youth return from school to an empty home.

Research has consistently shown that the presence of developmental supports and opportunities (protective factors) provide a better indicator of whether youth will grow up to become successful, well-adjusted adults than with the presence of risk factors. By providing youth with caring relationships, high expectations, and opportunities for meaningful participation, we meet the fundamental developmental needs that must be fulfilled if children and youth are to become happy and successful. Additional research prove afterschool helps kids attend school more often, get better grades, and build foundational skills, like communication, teamwork, and problem solving.



Delaware Afterschool Network (DEAN) is a Network of after-school, out of school, and summer learning champions advocating for high quality afterschool programs and programming for all Delaware's children. DEAN is actively championing the expansion of high-quality after-school programs so children have more options for safe, supervised activities.

**Afterschool programs are solutions that:**

- Increase Student Achievement
- Supports Working Families
- Encourages Future Careers

DEAN is collaborating with community-based organizations like Sussex County Health Coalition Youth Engagement and Serving Organization (YESO) to develop best practices and policies aimed at ensuring afterschool programming includes these kinds of activities.

United Way of Delaware partners with DEAN to ensure families from high-need communities are aware of afterschool options. As part of this work, DEAN, with support from several partners, is developing an interactive map that will highlight locations, daily operation, and the types of programs offered by afterschool programs in communities throughout the state, providing professional development and networking opportunities, and addressing policies that impact the afterschool community.

"Quality afterschool programs can inspire children to learn and connect with each other, while providing working parents the peace of mind that comes from knowing their children are safe and supervised. These programs often provide students many of the skills they need to land their first job with businesses in their community. We want the best for our families and we know that afterschool programs work. In October, we are preparing to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of Lights On Afterschool! "Since 2000, Lights On Afterschool has been celebrated nationwide to call attention to the importance of afterschool programs for America's children, families and communities and we are looking forward to the celebration," says long-time champion Regina Sidney-Brown, Director, Delaware Afterschool Network.

Are you interested in keeping afterschool programming in Delaware thriving? If so, please contact Regina Sidney-Brown at [rsbrown@uwde.org](mailto:rsbrown@uwde.org).

### SCHC BOARD MEMBER JAY OWENS

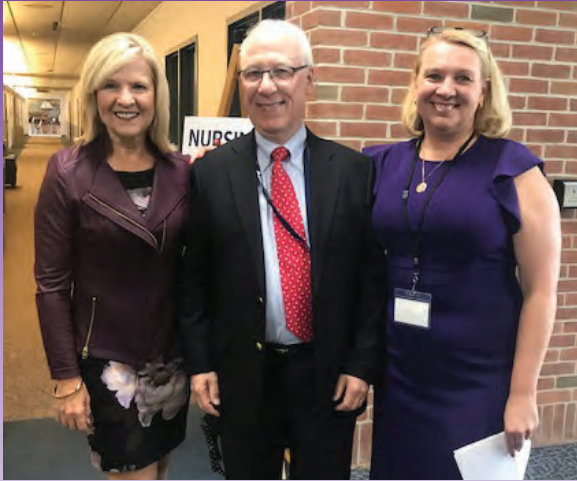


Jay Owens joined the Sussex County Health Coalition's Board of Directors in January of 2018 and has been a vital member of this dedicated group of volunteers. He is a true "Champion for Children" as he continues to ensure quality education and access to services for all children in the Indian River School District in his role as the Assistant Superintendent. We are so proud of Jay and all the meaningful work he is doing in Sussex County.

We are truly thankful to have such a warm, caring person on our board.



# A day of HOPE *a Huge Success!*



Lt. Governor Bethany Long Hall with Peggy Geisler and Dr. Botvin



Seaford Purple Ambassadors with Dr. Botvin, the Lt. Governor, Peggy Geisler and Seaford High School teacher Mr. Cohee

The Sussex County Health Coalition was pleased to invite Dr. Gilbert J. Botvin, an internationally known expert in prevention, to deliver the keynote address at “A Day of Hope” Summit, held on June 12 in Georgetown. Lieutenant Governor Bethany Hall-Long was honored with a Community Health Innovation Award for her unwavering dedication to address Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders in the First State. The conference was attended by Senator Bryant Richardson, prevention specialists, mental health professionals, educational staff, and local high school students. The event addressed many issues related to addiction and mental health from multiple angles in hopes of promoting prevention and recovery. This event served as a soft launch for the 2019 Anti-Stigma and Awareness Campaign spearheaded by PMG Consulting and the Sussex County Health Coalition.

Dr. Botvin’s keynote address described advances in prevention science over the past 35 years and the development of effective approaches, including an evidence-based prevention program that he developed, called Botvin LifeSkills Training (LST). This program is currently being implemented in several Sussex schools, with the goal to increase prevention services in every school. LST promotes healthy student development by teaching personal self-management skills to improve decision-making and problem-solving abilities, and cope with stress and anxiety; general social skills to overcome shyness, communicating clearly, and building healthy relationships; and skills to resist social influences to smoke, drink alcohol, and use marijuana and other illicit drugs.

We were proud to feature our Sussex Goes Purple “Purple Ambassadors” during the Day of Hope. This group is a peer-to-

peer implementation of the LST program in Seaford High and Middle schools. Under the project—supported by the Delaware Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health, Highmark, and all three hospitals in the community—11 Seaford High School students were trained in the LST program and are now known as “Purple Ambassadors.”

Thank you to all the attendees, organizers, volunteers and presenters for making this such a great event. Please see the special note we received from Dr. Botvin below.

*Dear Sussex County Health Coalition,*

*Thank YOU for your kind note. I was so pleased to be a part of your Day of Hope and honored to be the keynote speaker.*

*It was great meeting you, Lieutenant Governor Bethany Hall-Long, Senator Bryant Richardson, Peggy Geisler, and all the “Purple Ambassadors.” What a great group and a wonderful experience! Meeting people like the ones attending your conference, especially the purple ambassadors, and seeing our research come to fruition are what makes all of our years of hard work worthwhile.*

*I was very impressed with everyone I met and their commitment to prevention and the healthy development of Delaware’s youth. They are fortunate to have such a knowledgeable group of dedicated champions. I’m confident that this is just the beginning of great things to come in Delaware.*

*Thanks again for the great work you are doing in Delaware...and for making me feel so welcome.*

**Gilbert J. Botvin, Ph.D.**

SAVE THE DATE!

## MEET THE FUNDER SERIES

The Sussex County Health Coalition is pleased to welcome Cynthia Pritchard from Philanthropy Delaware to present at our upcoming "Meet the Funder" event planned for Fall.

**WHEN: Friday, September 13, 2019**

**WHERE: Sussex County Health Coalition Office  
21133 Sterling Ave., Suite 12  
Georgetown, DE**

**TIME: 2-3:30 PM**

Registration will open soon for this event. Seating will be limited, so we ask that only one representative per agency plan to attend.

**CYNTHIA PRITCHARD** has over 30 years in executive planning, administration, fundraising communications, strategic grantmaking, and programmatic experience in the nonprofit and private sectors. She is currently the President and CEO of Philanthropy Delaware, a statewide grant makers association. Pritchard has served as executive staff for United Way, Departments of Labor and Medicaid, National Multiple Sclerosis Society; American Red Cross; Nationwide Insurance and Financial and Continuum Healthcare. She is considered a strategic thought leader in the areas of arts/culture/historic preservation, workforce development, early childhood, youth career development, adult education, civic engagement, volunteerism, health care, public policy, and mental health.



### WORKSITE WELLNESS LUNCH AND LEARNS

Delaware Cooperative Extension, a collaboration between the University of Delaware and Delaware State University, launched a survey in May 2018 that measured the needs of the communities by surveying internal and external stakeholders.

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of 13 state-level issues, and then more specifically, issues concerning topics such as economic development, leadership development, health, and agriculture and the environment. Eighty-four percent of participants reported "Preventing Chronic Disease" as a very important issue. When asked specifically about health issues in the community, respondents ranked the "Availability of Physical Activity Programs" as a very important health issue. Respondents were also asked to rank their priorities for research and training topics. "Preparing Healthy and Safe Food," "Physical Activity," "Healthy Behaviors and Dietary Practices," and "Healthy Foods on a Budget" as top priorities for community training topics.

As a response to this and many other community health needs assessments, the Sussex County Health Coalition (SCHC) and the University of Delaware Cooperative Extension Service (UDCES), work together to address community needs around health and financial wellness. Programs are held twice monthly in various host community organizations in Georgetown and Seaford. Programs are typically held in a "lunch and learn"

format, spanning from 45 minutes to one hour, beginning at 12 pm. In addition to the educational program, a folder of helpful resources and materials is provided to each participant, as well as a healthy lunch. Lunch and learns are currently offered to community members free of charge through funding from the Delaware Division of Public Health.

The UDCES offers programs that cover a variety of health-related and financial wellness topics including: Food safety for the home kitchen, cooking classes for diabetics (or those caring for diabetics), osteoporosis, Alzheimer's Disease prevention through diet, celiac disease, healthy meal preparation for small families (1-2 people), making mealtime special, preparing and freezing meals in bulk, whole grains, healthy meals in less time using slow cookers and pressure cookers, fad diets, what to do with leftover foods, reading the new nutrition facts label, sodium, decoding food label terms (i.e. organic, local, non-GMO, etc.), vegan and vegetarian diets, how to talk to your doctor, mindfulness, health insurance, reducing debt, saving on a tight budget, creating a retirement paycheck, managing family resources, aging parent's finances, and financial empowerment training.

**If your organization is located in Sussex County and would like to serve as a host site for a lunch and learn program, please contact Crystal Timmons Underwood at [ctunderwood@pmgconsulting.net](mailto:ctunderwood@pmgconsulting.net).**

**If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a UDCES volunteer to help with community health and financial wellness outreach, please contact Nancy Mears, Sussex County Coordinator, Family & Consumer Sciences, University of Delaware Cooperative Extension, at 302-856-7303 or [mears@udel.edu](mailto:mears@udel.edu).**