



DMHAS Update

Message from Commissioner Nancy Navarretta



Time seems to fly by when you're busy, and so it seems another summer has come to an end. The months of August and September brought with them several very important observances—International Overdose Awareness Day and National Recovery Month allowed us to raise awareness of resources related to substance use and mental health recovery while celebrating the accomplishments of 20 million people in recovery in the U.S. As we remember those we have lost, let us also remember those who are living in recovery, and the part that we all play in the many pathways to recovery.

September also marks [National Suicide Prevention Month](#), and we remember the lives lost to suicide, those who struggle with suicidal ideation, and acknowledge the individuals, families, and communities that have been impacted. It is also a time to raise awareness about suicide prevention and share messages of hope. Towards that end, we recently joined Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro and other stakeholders in New Haven to highlight the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and other resources available for help.

In this newsletter we also share new developments related to Know Ur Vape, our youth vaping prevention campaign, and highlight the new [Recovery Happens Here](#) campaign, which has proven to be quite popular. As always, thanks for reading and please feel free to get in touch with your ideas and feedback.

Know Ur Vape Campaign News

DMHAS and the CT Clearinghouse partnered to launch the Know Ur Vape campaign, which utilizes the power of social media influencers to prevent teens and young adults from starting to vape and encourage those who do vape to seek help to quit. As part of this highly successful campaign, television personality Nia Moore recently sat down with Megan Albanese of the Southington STEPS coalition to discuss her personal (negative) experience with vaping on Instagram live. [View the conversation here.](#)

We are honored to have our Know Ur Vape campaign featured on the Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) [Just Think Twice website](#) and listserv. The campaign has also been featured in the [SAMHSA Center for Substance Abuse Prevention \(CSAP\)](#) as well as by the [Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America \(CADCA\)](#). For more information about the Know Ur Vape campaign, please visit knowurvape.com.

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International Overdose Awareness Day

Thank you to all who joined us in observance of International Overdose Awareness Day at Walnut Hill Park in New Britain. Speakers included Governor Lamont, Lieutenant Governor Bysiewicz, Congresswoman Hayes, Attorney General Tong, Comptroller Scanlon, Commissioners Navarretta, Juthani and Dorantes, and Senator Anwar. We also heard from Pastor Dana Smith (New Life II), Chief Bruce Baxter (New Britain EMS), Ches and Sarah (New Britain Recovers), Jillian Rovito (CCAR Recovery Coach), and Susan Vidro, who lost her fiancé to an overdose. A special thank you to all of the volunteers who helped with the event and to those who partner with us in the ongoing effort to address the opioid crisis.



#RecoveryHappensHere Campaign

DMHAS is excited to announce a new campaign for [National Recovery Month](#) in September, titled [Recovery Happens Here](#). National Recovery Month began in 1989, and is observed every September to promote and support new evidence-based treatment and recovery practices, the nation's strong and proud recovery community, and the dedication of service providers and communities who make recovery in all its forms possible. Click the images below to hear their stories. For more information, please visit the [Recovery Happens Here webpage](#) or [Facebook page](#).

Your Story Matters!

Sharing your story of recovery, and journey to wellness, helps others get well too.



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RECOVERY HAPPENS HERE X

“No matter what, just don't give up. Find the supports that are necessary.”



Maggie

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RECOVERY HAPPENS HERE X

“For me, recovery is learning about myself.”



Ryan

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The Four Major Dimensions of Recovery

- Health**
Overcoming or managing one's disease(s) or symptoms, and making informed, healthy choices that support physical and emotional well-being
- Home**
Having a stable and safe place to live
- Purpose**
Conducting meaningful daily activities, such as a job, school volunteerism, family caretaking, or creative endeavors, and the independence, income, and resources to participate in society
- Community**
Having relationships and social networks that provide support, friendship, love, and hope

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RECOVERY HAPPENS HERE X

September is National Suicide Prevention Month



Suicide is a leading cause of death and claimed the lives of nearly 50,000 individuals in 2022, according to preliminary data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Between 2000 and 2020, suicide rates increased by 30% across all sexes, races, and ethnicities, although rates rose fastest for females and American Indian and Alaskan Natives. Other populations at greater risk of suicide include LGBTQ youth, who are four times more likely to commit suicide as compared to their peers, and veterans, whose suicide rate is 57.3% higher than non-veterans.

To raise awareness of suicide and to identify ways to prevent it, September was designated as Suicide Prevention Month. We support suicide prevention through several mechanisms, including convening interagency working groups to develop a coordinated suicide prevention strategy, investing in awareness and evidence-based prevention initiatives, and promoting resources like the National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, 988.

Although mental health and suicide prevention are important to address year-round, this month provides a dedicated time for people, organizations, and communities to join their voices and share that there is hope, help is available, and healing is possible. DMHAS Deputy Commissioner Colleen Harrington recently joined Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro, President & CEO of Mental Health Connecticut Luis B. Perez, President and CEO of United Way Connecticut Lisa Tepper-Bates, and Thomas Burr of NAMI Connecticut to recognize September as Suicide Prevention Awareness Month and highlight critical resources such as the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. [Recognizing September as National Suicide Prevention Month](#) (WTNH)



(L to R): Thomas Burr (NAMI CT), DC Colleen Harrington, Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro, Lisa Tepper-Bates (UW-CT), Luis Perez (Mental Health CT)



Harm Reduction Conference

Thank you to everyone who joined us at the 3rd Annual DMHAS Harm Reduction Conference. We had over 250 participants in person, and another 150 join us online to hear experienced practitioners from across the country share their insights on issues of equity within harm reduction.






**The 5th Women's Services Conference:
Understanding the Holistic Journey of
Women and Recovery**

Friday November 3rd, 2023 | 9am-4pm | 6 CECs | Virtual



Maggie Young, DSW, LADC,
LMSW, CCS



Jelan Agnew, LCSW



Marilyn Sanders, MD



Thema Bryant, PhD

This conference has been designed to increase awareness about various topics that impact the healing process that women take to recover from substance use and mental health disorders including trauma, shame, attachment, and resilience. In addition to the esteemed speakers above, a panel discussion of perinatal subject matter experts will enhance the day's agenda from a holistic and recovery-oriented lens.

**CLICK HERE TO SIGN UP
FOR VIRTUAL TRAINING**

Sponsored by The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and The Connecticut Women's Consortium. CECs are approved by NASM CT with reciprocity from CCB-C1. The above training opportunity was made possible through the use of SAMHSA funding.

5th Annual Women's Services Conference

Please join us on November 3, 2023, for the 5th Annual DMHAS Women's Services Conference, titled "Understanding the Holistic Journey of Women and Recovery."

This conference will increase awareness about various topics that impact the healing process that women take to recover from substance use and mental health disorders.

For more information and to register, [please click here](#).

Equal Opportunity Office Offering Career Counseling

We are pleased to announce that the [Equal Employment Opportunity \(EEO\) office](#) will be conducting career counseling sessions. These individualized sessions are designed to provide you with invaluable guidance and support in navigating your career paths within our organization. Whether you are seeking a promotion, considering a new role, or simply looking for ways to enhance your professional development, our experienced EEO staff members will be available to assist you in every step of the process. The EEO office also offers resume writing, interview techniques, and assistance with the State Application process.

The EEO office understands that career growth is essential for personal fulfillment and organizational success, and we are committed to helping you achieve your goals. To help us help you please, [Email the EEO office](#) and provide a copy of your current resume, and any job posting you are applying for. We encourage all employees to take advantage of this opportunity and look forward to supporting each of you in your continued professional journey.

In Connecticut, the national 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is answered by the United Way of CT Contact Center. Anyone can call, text or chat to connect to services, AND you don't have to be in crisis or thinking about suicide to access services. You can reach out early to prevent crisis if you're in mental or emotional distress of any kind, or if you're concerned for someone else.

Call or Text 988, or chat www.988lifeline.org The Contact Center staff are available to listen, offer support and resources, and connect to mobile crisis services for in-person support for all ages. For medical emergencies call **988**.

[How the United Way of Connecticut Fields Crisis Calls – NBC Connecticut](#)



The State of Minority Mental Health in Connecticut

The DMHAS Office of Multicultural Health Equity (OMHE) Minority Mental Health Awareness Month webinar is now available to watch on demand! Click the image to view.

For more information, please visit the [OMHE webpage](#).

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