



## Event Summary Report

Event: Recovery Talks: Community Listening Forum Date: 4/28/16

Location: Palisades Center Mall

Activity: Forum for individuals and family members on alcoholism/drug addiction

Coordinator: Stephanie Campbell Contact: 518-487-4395 x16

## About Our Event Activity...

<b>Executive Summary:</b>	The Rockland Council for Addiction and Drug Dependency (RCADD) and Friends of Recovery - Rockland co-sponsored the FOR-NY <i>Recovery Talks Community Listening Forum</i> . It was the 10 <sup>th</sup> in a series of local forums being held across New York State to provide community members the opportunity to share their personal experiences with legislators, law enforcement and other leaders in dealing with alcohol and drug addiction, the loss of a family member or friend, as well as recovery from addiction.	
<b>Category</b>	Public Policy	
<b>Number of participants</b>	Adults: 102 Children:0	
<b>Purpose:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide a safe space for individuals and families in recovery to voice their experiences around addiction, loss and recovery</li> <li>2. Help individuals and families overcome the stigma that prevents many people from seeking help</li> <li>3. Engage the community in a productive discussion with local leaders that allows for more effective policies on addiction/recovery</li> </ol>	
<b>Satisfaction Summary</b>  Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent....	Overall ease of event:	5
	Overall satisfaction with outcome:	5
	Value to Recovery Community:	5
	Recommend Repeat of Event (Y/N)	Y

## How We Did It...

<b>The Event Agenda:</b>		
6:30 pm	<b>Welcome:</b>	Ruthie Bowles, Director, RCADD Robert J. Lindsey, FOR-NY, CEO
6:40 pm	<b>Moderator:</b>	Stephanie M. Campbell, FOR-NY Director of Policy
	<b>Panellists:</b>	Assemblymember Ellen Jaffee, 97 <sup>th</sup> District



		Evan Sullivan, Legislative Director for Senator David Carlucci, 38 <sup>th</sup> District
		Anne Calajoe, Director of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services, Rockland County Department of Mental Health
		Susan Sherwood, Commissioner, Rockland County Department of Social Services
		Michael Leitzes, Commissioner, Rockland County Department of Mental Health
		Thomas P. Zugibe, Rockland County District Attorney
		Kathleen Tower-Bernstein, Director, Rockland County Department of Probation
		Willie J. Trotman, President, Spring Valley Branch NAACP
		Chief Paul J. Modica, Spring Valley Police Department
6:50 pm	<b>Speakers:</b>	Community Members
8:10 pm	<b>Comments:</b>	Listening Panel Members
8:25 pm	<b>Wrap-Up:</b>	Robert J. Lindsey, FOR-NY, CEO

#### Highlights – Comments, Problems Encountered, Opportunities Identified

- There is a desperate need for increased after-care housing facilities in Rockland County. As of now, there is only on half-way house located in Haverstraw and a couple of sober living facilities in Rockland County.
- Local communities and their board meetings are our largest obstacle since most people who are unaware of individuals struggling with addiction do not realize that these “PEOPLE” are not only fighting to better themselves, but also ‘STAY ALIVE.”
- There’s a huge stigma about people in recovery, the public needs to be informed, aware and supportive concerning the number one killer in our community”.
- Once an individual realizes that they have a problem with addiction, and enter into a rehabilitation facility, there is a certain level of care needed once they complete this initial level of treatment. The transition from a rehabilitation center back into everyday society is extremely difficult for most people in recovery. Without the proper supervision and preparation, this transition is almost impossible.
- There are many problems and difficulties in many areas when it comes to treating addiction, from insurance coverage to finding the right rehab program for the necessary amount of time. One of the biggest issues is the aftercare once a person finishes their program, whether that program is inpatient or outpatient. Being told to “go to meetings” is just not enough.
- What is needed are Recovery Community Centers for Adults and Youth...people can connect with each other and receive encouragement, motivation, and support while building a healthy social network. My son did not have this type of opportunity...it was not even a possibility because such a place doesn’t not presently exist in Rockland County.
- My own personal story revolves around my lack of ability to get the attention I needed when I was ready to ask for help. For several reasons; lack of beds, detox symptoms not severe enough, BAC not high enough...I was turned away...I COULD NOT get the help locally when I had finally come to terms with my disease and had finally asked for help.
- Without any regard for my well-being, this “addiction psychiatrist” supplied me with over 2,000 pills a month that was a lethal smorgasbord of a wide variety of opiates and benzodiazepines. It would help to immerse those within the medical community who are not educated on this disease in learning about the disease of addiction and tis co-occurring disorders.



- This county is in dire need of additional transitional housing to allow those individuals leaving treatment the opportunity to have a safe environment to stabilize their recovery as I was blessed to do.
- Pursuing detox was a gruelling, lengthy process, lasting months. I took my daughter to the ER seeking detox. We waited 12 hours before she was told her levels were not high enough to be considered in withdrawal. So we left and went to another hospital, sat for 15 hours to be told the same thing. We considered letting her take more drugs so her levels would be high enough. If this were any other disease she would have been seen right away.
- Our son has been in jail several times over the years currently in for 15 months, during which time he has received **no treatment for his addiction**. The estimated cost of \$135,000 and rising, for his incarceration, plus another \$15000 for hospital care when he was assaulted in jail could have been used much more productively, if spent on prevention and more effective treatment.

### What We Required...

**Labor:** Stephanie Campbell, Bob Lindsey, Michael Fidlow, Kathleen Katt Bennie, Ruthie Bowles, and members of FOR-NY Rockland helped set up the event.

**Materials Needed:** Flyers, handouts, table cloth, cards, pamphlets, and sign-in sheets.

### What we Discovered...

#### Findings

- Rockland County only has one halfway house located in Haverstraw – they need additional halfway house, supportive living housing and recovery homes.
- Rockland County currently has not recovery system of care where people in addiction recovery can seek services to support recoverees as they return to health and wellness.
- It is vitally important to further education for Rockland County Law Enforcement, Medical Professional, Emergency Room Nurses/Physicians, EMT and business owners.
- Access to Treatment has been a long-term issue in Rockland County. People seeking treatment can experience significant barriers when attempting to enter treatment.
- Due to insurance restraints, people face a bare minimum length of stay, no aftercare plans, and no recovery community supports.
- Despite the fact that the Affordable Care Act made promise of treatment parity for substance use disorders, treatment methods have remained subpar to other medical disorders. Many private treatment facilities are unaffordable if insurance does not cover an appropriate length of stay.

#### Recommendations

- Sober Housing: Rockland County is in need of transitional housing to allow those leaving treatment a safe environment to stabilize their recovery.
- Recovery Community Centers for Adults / Youth: Rockland County needs Recovery Centers that can offer education, recovery life coaching, life skills training, vocational counselling, childcare, peer recovery groups, and other various programs of recovery to aid and help a recovery lifestyle.
- Addiction education for Rockland County Law Enforcement, Medical Professionals, Emergency Room Nurses, Physicians, first responders, and community leaders.



- Access to Treatment and Treatment on Demand: Insurance Companies must be held accountable so that they provide adequate and appropriate coverage and people must have treatment when they ask for it.