**SUCCESSES**

The Drug Overdose Task Force's successful partnering with a broad-based coalition has brought much progress in 2018. Celebrate with us some of the people and organizations making a difference.

The DOTF is a public/non-profit 'marriage' of Westmoreland County government and non-profit Westmoreland Community Action.

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**BUILDING BRIDGES**

DOTF working groups leverage the skills and experience of community members to act as force-multipliers. Our Pharmacy Working Group is applying novel, in-person visits to local pharmacies to ensure the availability of naloxone to those who need it most.

We’ve convened regional Opioid Centers of Excellence staff throughout 2018 to share best practices and lessons learned for professionals navigating this emerging model of care.

Mental Health America of Southwestern PA broadened focus in 2018 from their core of mental health programming to addressing the prevalence of co-occurring disorders. Their fall, 2018, conference, “Let’s Make Change” brought together professionals from both worlds, sparking a spirit of cooperation that will pay dividends to all Westmoreland Countians.

The DOTF was instrumental in obtaining the grant-funded National Association of Drug Court Professionals assessment of the Westmoreland County Drug Court, which will assist the County in future national accreditation and increasing the likelihood of future sustainability.

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**IN THE NEWS**

The Community Foundation of Westmoreland County, an affiliate of the Pittsburgh Foundation, convenes charitable Giving Circles. Donors contribute $1000 each, and funds are augmented by the Foundation.

In 2018, awards in the amount of $25,000 each were given to Lost Dreams Awakening and Faith Forward, to continue their work supporting those seeking long-term recovery and healthy families.

The DOTF was proud to be a part of the learning experience of donors this year. See the Pittsburgh Foundation article. Read CIRCLING UP SUPPORT Read it at https://cfwestmoreland.org/circling-up-support

Tribune Review: Overdose Deaths Drop Dramatically, Bringing Hope that Awareness is Working Read it at https://bit.ly/2AJQCM

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In 2018 the DOTF forged a partnership with the Westmoreland-Fayette Workforce Development Board to expand our Recovery Friendly Workplace initiative. With funding from WIB, we’ll staff a Workplace Outreach Specialist to connect employers and future employees with resources to make job sites safer, healthier, and more productive.

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REDUCING RISK

For the Westmoreland County Drug Court, we acquired a donation of Narcan for participants through the Kaleo Cares program. As with any chronic disease, relapse is possible, and having Narcan at hand can reduce the risk of accidental opioid poisoning for individuals at higher risk than average for overdose.

The DOTF distributed Dispose Rx packets throughout the County as a safe disposal option for unused Rx pain meds.

Our Pharmacy Working Group (Sue Schropp, RP; Dave Cobb, DDS, and Marce Banze, RN) visited pharmacies throughout Westmoreland County to ensure the availability of naloxone under PA"s Standing Order.

Through proactive outreach to local, state, and federal elected officials, the DOTF has influenced decision makers to take legislative action, including Governor Wolf’s $5M free community naloxone distribution in December of 2018.

Tim Phillips with Sen. Bob Casey

The DOTF was honored in February by the Diocese of Greensburg as an annual Salt and Light award winner. See the Tribune Review article.

with DOTF Coordinator, Mimi Thomas-Brooker

THE FAITH-BASED CONNECTION

2018 brought continued awareness that spirituality and faith can be key to recovery from the disease of addiction for many. Our work with the Diocese of Greensburg, Faith Forward, and local churches and ministeriums means these organizations have a place to turn for unbiased resources in their quest to promote healthy communities.

DOTF Director Tim Phillips with Principal Joe Rice, Aquinas Academy, Greensburg

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IN THEIR OWN WORDS

The DOTF reached out to the Highlands Hospital Center of Excellence before we opened our doors in early 2017 and has been a partner since that time. Tim continues to inspire me and our COE staff.

-Marianne Miele, Esq., Highlands Hospital Center of Excellence

Marianne with Tim and Rep. Justin Walsh

My son, Demetre Josebeck, was the catalyst behind Art for Recovery and Transformation, sponsored by the DOTF and Strive Health, which brought together over 80 community members, artists, and recovery advocates to talk about art as expression in recovery. Demetre lost his battle with substance use in 2018. Since then, the WCCC Demetre JoseBeck Scholarship for the Arts was created to aid any art student passionate about the arts. Demeter's mission to give voice to the recovery community, create conversation, and smash stigma through art will continue in 2019.

Toni Lynn Antonucci

As was said on the old TV series The A Team, “I love it when a plan comes together!”
As 2018 comes to a close, I am happy to report a significant reduction in our overdose deaths. If we just saw a slowdown, that would be GOOD. If the deaths leveled off, that would be GREAT. To see this very significant drop in deaths, I’m ECSTATIC!
From 193 deaths in 2017 to a forecasted 124 deaths in 2018 is remarkable.
Our work isn’t done and we can’t let our guard down.

Westmoreland County Coroner Ken Bacha, on reduced overdose deaths in 2018:

In 2018, IRETA worked intensively with providers in western PA; offered trainings hospitals and health centers on safer opioid prescribing and addressing risky substance use; and hosted the biggest Pittsburgh Recovery Walk yet! In 2019 the DOTF will partner with IRETA to offer SBIRT training.

Jessica Williams, IRETA

Support the DOTF's work

Memorialize a loved one or request that he or she be remembered in lieu of funeral flowers, honor a family celebration, or designate the DOTF as a beneficiary in your will. No gift is too large or too small.
Make your check payable to:
Westmoreland Community Action/DOTF
Accounting Department/Donations
Westmoreland Community Action
226 South Maple Avenue
Greensburg, PA 15601

WCA is a registered 501c3, so your donation is tax deductible to the extent of IRS regulations.

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