

The Connecticut General Assembly



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Reps. Morin, Guerrero Host Community Conversation on Opioid Addiction

Community members hear from experts on addiction



Rep. Russ Morin (at right), with Rep. Tony Guerrero, addresses the audience Monday evening at a community forum on opioid and heroin addiction in Wethersfield

State Reps. Russ Morin (D-Wethersfield) and **Tony Guerrero** (D-Rocky Hill/Newington/Wethersfield) hosted a community forum on opioid and heroin addiction Monday night along with the state Office of the Healthcare Advocate.

A panel of health care and public health experts discussed the opioid epidemic and resources to prevent and treat addiction, followed by an audience question and answer period. Reps. Morin and Guerrero opened the event by talking about the legislature's role in responding to the opioid crisis.

“There’s not a community in Connecticut that hasn’t felt the tragic consequences of heroin and opioid addiction. This is a difficult and complex issue, and we thought there was a need to bring all of the available information and resources together in one place,” **Rep. Morin** said. “I hope that the information presented tonight will help someone get the help they need – whether it’s through being able to recognize the signs of opioid abuse or knowing where to direct someone who needs treatment.”

“Connecticut is in the midst of a public health crisis,” **Rep. Guerrero** said. “Opioid overdoses claim lives almost every day. It’s important for the community to understand the tools that are out there to combat his epidemic.”

Panelists included Miriam Delphin-Rittmon, Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS); Pat Rehmer, president of the Behavioral Health Network and senior vice president of Hartford Health Care; Shawn Lang, Deputy Director of AIDS Connecticut; Ann Hartman, Assistant Director of Community Health at Central Connecticut Health District; and Terrence Wain, Operations Supervisor at ASM-Aetna Ambulance.

In 2016, the General Assembly passed legislation to prevent opioid abuse by capping first-time adult opioid prescriptions and all opioid prescriptions for minors at a seven-day supply. The law also increased access to Narcan, a drug that reverses opioid overdose, by allowing pharmacists to prescribe the medication and requiring municipalities to equip their first responders with Narcan.

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