The statistics just keep getting worse. And now, the problem of heroin overdoses and addiction has the attention of the White House.

According to statistics released this week by the Chief State Medical Examiner’s, the number of accidental intoxication deaths in Connecticut has more than doubled since 2012 with more than half of those deaths being attributed to heroin. Based on the number of fatalities through September, the office predicts 679 total deaths for all of last year, with heroin contributing to 387.

The report comes amid a rash of overdoses in New London County and a marked increase in Backus, Windham and Behavioral Health Network settings. There have been a number of public forums and panel discussions on the topic, including one at the Old State House in Hartford hosted by the White House drug policy czar Michael Botticelli and Gov. Dannel Malloy on Feb. 16.

“It’s going to take everybody working together to stop this crisis. It’s all about how we come together in meaningful ways and hear each other’s voices,” Botticelli said.

President Obama’s budget calls for $1.1 billion to help battle opiate abuse and improve access to treatment. U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal and Congressman Joe Courtney have requested $600 million in emergency funding to help battle the heroin crisis.

Hartford HealthCare’s Behavioral Health Network, and Backus and Windham hospitals, have been helping to lead the conversation on the issue with appearances at forums and panel discussions in New London, Colchester, Stonington, East Hartford, and the White House-sponsored forum in Hartford as well as the legislature.

Jim O’Dea, PhD, MBA, Vice President of Operations for the Behavioral Health Network, Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, speaks to an audience at the Old State House in Hartford Tuesday at an event attended by Hartford HealthCare Behavioral Health Network President Pat Rehmer.
An opportunity to educate the public

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Network, spoke Thursday, Feb. 18, before the state Appropriations Committee, which is considering a range of cuts to reduce the state’s budget deficit. He specifically cited a bill which would cut bed space for patients as a way to save money.

“I respectfully ask that you do not enact further cuts to mental health and substance abuse treatment services,” O’Dea said.

During a panel discussion hosted by Goodwin College on Feb. 15, Pat Rehmer, President of the Hartford HealthCare Behavioral Health Network highlighted the need for more beds for long-term substance abuse treatment.

“If people don’t get about 90 days of treatment in some way, shape or form, they’re not really getting the care they need. And, you may as well throw your money out the window,” said Rehmer.

O’Dea, echoed those sentiments in an interview with WFSB after the death of a UConn student who was battling heroin addiction.

“A week doesn’t go by where we don’t hear about another loss [of life because of heroin] in one of our emergency departments. We need to use this as an opportunity to educate the public about the importance of this issue and help people recognize that care and treatment is available and that recovery happens every day as well,” O’Dea said.

East Region Director of Emergency Services Karen Butterworth-Erban, RN, MSN has been a panelist at forums in Colchester and Stonington, and along with Rehmer, was an invited guest at the White House forum in Hartford on Feb. 16. Butterworth-Erban continues to stress the importance of immediate patient intervention in emergency departments for overdose victims and building community partnerships to address drug addiction.

“This is not necessarily a young person issue; It’s an ‘everyone’ issue,” Butterworth told a crowd of more than 300 during a forum at Bacon Academy in Colchester on Feb. 3.

Pat Rehmer, President of the Hartford HealthCare Behavioral Health Network, alongside Jack Malone, President and Executive Director of the Southeastern Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (SCADD), speaks during a community forum on the opiate epidemic hosted by Goodwin College in East Hartford on Monday, Feb. 15. Rehmer highlighted the need for more beds for long-term substance abuse treatment.

Upcoming events

- **Friday, Feb. 19, 6:30 p.m. at the East Hampton Middle School Library, 19 Childs Road, East Hampton.** Dr. J. Craig Allen, Medical Director, Rushford, participates in a panel discussion on opiate addiction. Sponsored by State Representative Melissa Ziobron.

- **Tuesday, March 8, 10 a.m. - noon in the Enfield Town Hall Council Chambers, 820 Enfield St., Enfield.** Dr. Samuel Silverman, MD, ABAM, Rushford’s Medical Director of Addiction Services and the Program Director for Rushford’s Addiction Medicine Fellowship presents “What is Addiction and Treatment Options” to the North Central Opioid Addiction Task Force.

- **Wednesday, March 9, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. at the QVCC Auditorium, 742 Upper Maple St., Danielson.** East Region Director of Emergency Services Karen Butterworth-Erban, RN, MSN, will attend an event to include the Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, treatment providers, prevention providers, police, and medical professionals.
Obama announces additional funding for opioid prevention

The Obama Administration announced an additional $1.1 billion in funding to address the opioid epidemic as part of the White House budget request for fiscal year 2017 at a news conference on Tuesday, Feb. 2.

About half the money would be used to expand treatment facilities, while the remainder would fund programs intended to prevent prescription drug overdoses, stop illegal sales and improve access to naloxone, the drug that reverses the effects of an opioid overdose.

The announcement reflected growing concerns across the country about the opioid public health epidemic. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, opioids were involved in more than 28,000 deaths in the United States in 2014.

Anything to share?

Are you interested in sharing your clinical experience or knowledge with co-workers throughout the HHC Behavioral Health Network? Consider submitting an article to the Clinical Corner. For more information, e-mail amanda.nappi@hhchealth.org or matt.burgard@hhchealth.org.

Join Weight Watchers today

The Hartford HealthCare Wellness Committee is encouraging employees across the organization to take advantage of HHC’s new partnership with Weight Watchers.

Employees can register online on a special portal that is now open to employees. Go to https://wellness.weightwatchers.com, then enter Employee ID: 11256026 and Employer Passcode: WW11256026 and follow the prompts to fill out your details.

Join the BHN team for the NAMI Walk for Awareness

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) in Connecticut will be hosting its annual NAMI Walk to support mental health awareness on Saturday, May 21, at Bushnell Park in Hartford.

The Hartford HealthCare Behavioral Health Network will be a sponsor for this event, and we are looking for employees at each of the entities within BHN (Backus and HOCC behavioral health units, Institute of Living, Natchaug and Rushford) to sign up as captains to encourage staff to join the BHN walking team. We are hoping for a strong BHN representation at the event. If our team captains are among the first 10 to sign up for the event, they will receive a $5 Dunkin Donuts gift card!

Contact Amanda Nappi at amanda.nappi@hhchealth.org or Matt Burgard at matt.burgard@hhchealth.org for additional help or with questions.
A weekly roundup of kudos from staff and patients. Please email your submissions to matt.burgard@hhchealth.org. Editors reserve the right to edit submission for length and grammar.

Feline freed!

On a day in January, we heard from some of our staff that there was a cat stuck on the roof of the hospital. They could see the cat through ventilation grate. After some investigation, we did hear the cat through an access door on the roof. We opened the door and out jumped a black cat. The cat was very friendly and came right over to us. We safely got the cat off the roof and back on solid ground. Once on the ground, the cat followed the Maintenance staff so Susan Williams took the cat and called Animal Control.

Many thanks to Laura Warner, Brian Holman, Tyler Rowett, Scott Cornell, Susan Williams and others for their assistance with this rescue.

— Scott Crawford
Manager, Natchaug Facilities

Great job, Jen!

Thank you Jen Staehly! Your willingness to step in and help out when and wherever needed is commendable! We appreciate your exceptional demonstration of the third H3W Leadership Value — Volunteering Discretionary Effort Constantly. You’ve helped with groups, taken van runs, done intakes and continue to help other sites with UR to name a few. Kudos to you Jen!

— Angela Hernandez MSW, LCSW
Program Director, Joshua Center Shoreline

Excellent work

I would like to say thanks to Kayne Gregory and Cathy Walton for all the hard work within each program and showcasing the success throughout the last year during the Quality/H3W Council meeting. Keep up the great work.

— Paul Simeone,
Natchaug H3W Facilitator

Here’s to you!

Client’s mother offers thanks

Dear Erin, Scott, Kaitlin and Dr. Sugarman,

On behalf of my family, I wanted to extend our sincere thanks for your near heroic efforts to help us get our son to an inpatient treatment center. Despite the fact we got off to a rocky start, the team rallied together to figure out how we could facilitate an intervention on-site and was instrumental in getting our son to a place he could get the help he needs.

Thanks to all of you our son made it to a recovery center in Las Vegas. Each and every one of you went above and beyond, and by doing so you may have saved the life of my son. We will forever be grateful for your care and resolve.

— Scott Crawford
Manager, Natchaug Facilities

Thanks for being there

“But no matter what I will always remember you guys, my second family. I thank ya’ll for understanding my situations/problems. Thank you for being there when nobody else was. Love, Rey <3”

— Quote from a letter written by a discharging Journey House resident

Great job, Jen!

Thank you Jen Staehly! Your willingness to step in and help out when and wherever needed is commendable! We appreciate your exceptional demonstration of the third H3W Leadership Value — Volunteering Discretionary Effort Constantly. You’ve helped with groups, taken van runs, done intakes and continue to help other sites with UR to name a few. Kudos to you Jen!

— Angela Hernandez MSW, LCSW
Program Director, Joshua Center Shoreline
Dr. Schwartz presents at prestigious Maryland institution

Institute of Living Psychiatrist-in-Chief and Hartford HealthCare Vice President Harold I. (Hank) Schwartz, MD, spoke before a packed auditorium at the prestigious Sheppard Pratt Health System in Maryland earlier this month on the psychology of Adam Lanza, who carried out the 2012 mass shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

Dr. Schwartz’s presentation, called “The Sandy Hook Murders: Adam Lanza and the Mind of a Mass Shooter,” was delivered at Grand Rounds at Sheppard Pratt, which is located in Towson, Md., and is known as one of five “Ivy League” psychiatric institutions in the country which was established in the 19th Century. The IOL is also considered among those five institutions.

Dr. Schwartz spoke about the mental health and psychiatric factors that contributed to Lanza’s horrific actions, which led to the deaths of 26 people including 20 schoolchildren and Lanza’s mother. The presentation was also broadcast to seven sites across Maryland.

Dr. Schwartz is expected to deliver similar presentations to the Capital Region Education Council (CREC) and the Connecticut Association of Advanced Practice Registered Nurses in the near future.

Family Resource Center Support Groups

The IOL Family Resource Center (FRC) holds regular support groups. All programs are free of charge and, unless otherwise noted, are held in the Massachusetts Cottage, First Floor Group Room at the IOL Campus, 200 Retreat Ave., Hartford. For addition information, please contact the FRC at 860-545-7665 or 860-545-1888. The upcoming IOL FRC Support Group schedule is as follows:

- **Anxiety Disorders: An Introduction.** Feb. 23, April 19, 6:30 – 7:45 p.m. This lecture is for families and friends of individuals who have an anxiety disorder or a related disorder. Participants will acquire a basic understanding of anxiety disorders, their treatments and suggestions to help them better cope with the illness.

- **Yoga.** Feb. 23, March 22, March 29, April 19, May 24, June 21, 5 - 6 p.m. in the Commons Building, Hartford Room. Open to adult staff and family members. Mats are provided or bring your own! The class begins with breathing exercises and gentle stretches, followed by a series of poses and ends with relaxation and meditation. Instructor: Valerie Raggio, LCSW, Yoga Fit, Level 1 Certified. To RSVP or inquire, call the FRC at 860-545-7716 or email patriciac.graham@hhchealth.org

- **Social Support Group — LGBTQ Issues (Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/Questioning).** Feb. 24, March 9, March 23, April 13, April 27, May 11, May 25, June 8, June 22 (Second and fourth Wednesday of each month), 5 – 6:15 p.m. in the Center Building, Young Adult Service Group Room. Support group for 16- to 23-year-olds who identify LGBTQ issues as being prominent in their lives. The goal is to discuss support strategies to manage life challenges.

- **Dementia Support/Educational Group Meeting.** March 1, April 5, May 3, June 7 (First Tuesday of each month), 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Donnelly Conference Room, First Floor. Please join us as we bring together experts and those who want guidance, direction, and support. Space is limited — reservations are required by calling 860-545-7665.

- **Survivors Of Suicide Support Group.** March 2, April 6, May 4, June 1 (First Wednesday of the month), 7 – 8:15 p.m. For those who have lost someone close to them by suicide. Please call the RSVP numbers with questions or concerns. 860-545-7716 or 860-545-7665.

- **Support Group For Families Dealing With Major Mental Illness.** March 3, March 17, April 7, April 21, May 5, May 19, June 2, June 16 (First and third Thursday of each month), 5:15 - 6:30 p.m. in the Center Building, First Floor Conference Room. For family and friends of individuals who have schizophrenia, bipolar or other related disorders. Share your success and struggles. Learn to care for yourself while you are caring for others.

- **Youth Psychosis Family Support Group.** March 3, March 17, April 7, April 21, May 5, May 19, June 2, June 16 (First and third Thursday of each month), 5:15 - 6:30 p.m. For parents with youth up to age 18 who have psychotic symptoms such as: hallucinations, delusions, paranoia, disorganized thoughts and behavior or are diagnosed with Schizophrenia and other related disorders.
Save the date for annual benefit

On Thursday, March 24, the ECSU Foundation will host its annual benefit luncheon for Natchaug Hospital’s educational programs. This year’s keynote speaker Mike Lawlor, the Connecticut Under Secretary for Criminal Justice Policy and Planning, will give a presentation entitled, “Connecticut’s Second Chance Society: A public health approach to addiction.”

The event will be held at the Betty R. Tipton Room in the Student Center at Eastern Connecticut State University from noon to 1:30 p.m. Each guest is asked to contribute a minimum donation of $100. Please RSVP by Wednesday, March 16 to Sherry Smardon at ext. 65910 or sherry.smardon@hhchealth.org.

Nightingale nominees needed by today

The deadline to nominate nurses from Natchaug Hospital for the annual Nightingale Awards is Friday, Feb. 19. Nightingale nominees are those in the nursing profession who go beyond the call of duty, are committed to the community and support the nursing profession.

To nominate someone, complete the form on the Natchaug Intranet and return it to Paula Purvis. Nominees will be asked to participate in an interview and provide a short biography. A selection committee of Nightingale nurses from the prior year will choose 12 recipients from across the East Region. Winners will be recognized at the annual Nightingale Awards ceremony on Thursday, May 12, at the Mashantucket Pequot Museum. Award recipients are selected using objective criteria that demonstrate their clinical excellence, experience, community involvement, education and patient satisfaction efforts.

The Nightingale Awards for Excellence in Nursing program, organized by the Visiting Nurses Association of Southeastern Connecticut, celebrates outstanding nurses and the nursing profession as a whole.

Natchaug nets $75,000 grant

Natchaug Hospital was one of 34 nonprofit providers that was awarded a grant from Connecticut’s Nonprofit Grant Program.

The grant program, created by Gov. Dannel Malloy in 2013, helps nonprofit providers invest in projects that will achieve new efficiencies so they can enhance the delivery of services.

Natchaug plans to use the funds to expand the Sachem House and Mansfield Young Adult programs to a new building at 151-155 Storrs Road. The renovations to the building will allow both programs to expand and help more clients on a daily basis.

Do You Provide Care or Support for a Loved One?
A Parent, Grandparent, Spouse, Child, Grandchild, Relative, or Friend

Do You Work Caring for Others?
As a Nurse, Counselor, Teacher, Service Professional
In Healthcare, Education, Ministry, Public Safety, or Human Services

Do You Sometimes Struggle with Compassion Fatigue?
Feeling Stressed, Overwhelmed, Emotionally Burned Out, Weary, Discouraged, or Exhausted

Did you answer yes to any of these questions?
Then this is a Program for You
Quiet Corner Caregiver’s Support Service

Resource Information Provided
Communication Network Development
Positive Self-care Training
Support Group Participation

Saint Philip’s Church 63 Grove Street Putnam on the corner of Grove and Pleasant Street
Meeting room down the stairs at the rear of Church off Pleasant Street

Tuesday Evenings starting 3/1/16 – 5/31/16
6:30 pm for light refreshment and fellowship, 7 pm to 8:30 pm for program
Free service — All are welcome
Come the weeks you can
For more information call 860 928-3510 or email to qccss@gmx.com

Facilitators: Jim Murray MA, LPC, former Director of Saint Francis Care Outpatient Psychiatric Services; Clinical Director of the BlueRidge Center, Director of Adult Psychiatry and Chemical Dependency Services Natchaug Hospital; Director of Straight New England Family Recovery Program; Karen Murray MA, LPC, CSAP, former Clinical Consultant with TEEG for AfterSchool Services, and Director of Clinical Service for DCI Adoption and Foster Families for SanGane; Director of Harvard Medical School Cocaine Recovery Project; Director Small Business Employee Assistance Consortium Family Services of Central Mass; Sue Moon-MA -Early Childhood Education; Advanced Certificate in Conflict Resolution and Peaceable Schools, Northeast Connecticut Area Volunteer Coordinator for Heifer International, Chairperson of The Curriculum of Hope for a Peaceful World, Member of Re-evaluation Counseling Community.
Rushford staff members celebrated the opening of the organization’s new adult outpatient treatment center in Cheshire this week.

The center, which is located in a spacious suite in the medical office building at 680 South Main St., features private clinical and counseling rooms along with group rooms for a wide range of services including Medication Assisted Treatment (suboxone) for heroin and opioid addiction. The center offers flexible hours for busy professionals seeking private, comprehensive care.

The need for these services continues to grow throughout the region, and the Behavioral Health Network leadership is now planning to open new centers in Avon and other locations within the next few months.

Rushford opened a new Medication Assisted Treatment center in Cheshire. Among the staff members there welcoming patients this week are, from left, Morgan Schell, Clinician III; Meagen Diana, Clinician III; Amy Di Mauro, Director; and Hollie Sabetta, Administrator.

The Treasure Trove is a free classified ad section for the benefit of Behavioral Health Network employees, retirees, medical staff and volunteers.

We welcome your submissions, which you can submit by emailing matt.burgard@hhchealth.org or amanda.nappi@hhchealth.org. The deadline for submissions to be included in each Friday’s BHNews is Tuesday at noon. BHNews will include community events for not-for-profit organizations that are open to the public and free of charge. We do not accept ads for real estate, firearms or personal ads.

FOR SALE

2002 DODGE DAKOTA CLUB CAB — Four-wheel drive, V6, 119,000 miles. $3,800 or best offer. Call 860-546-6162 and please leave a message.

2001 ACURA TL — V6, runs good, 188,000 miles. $1,800. Call 860-546-6162 and please leave a message.

1998 FORD F-150 PICKUP TRUCK — Extended cab, 4x4, V-8 automatic with overdrive, power steering, power brakes, runs strong, bed liner, Reese hitch, well-maintained, clean title, 139,000 miles. $2,850 or best offer. Call 860-235-7895.

FURNITURE — Sofa and Loveseat, each piece contains two recliners, good condition, tan, bone and light blue, $200 for both. Bedroom set, full size bed, mattress, box spring, headboard, seven drawer dresser with mirror, rightstand, good condition, dark maple, $200 for the set. Call 860-428-6339.

VILANO BICYCLE — White with stationary stand, brand new, asking $200. Call 860-642-7405 and please leave a message.

NATURAL RUBY RING — 14 karat white gold with a five karat natural Ruby set in a one karat Diamond Halo, slightly worn, $1,000 or best offer. Call 860-546-6162 and please leave a message.

EVENTS

FISH & CHIPS — Fridays through Friday, March 18, 3:30-7 p.m. at St. James Episcopal Church Poquetannuck, 95 Route 2A, Preston. Baked and fried fish, gift certificates available, cole slaw, fresh bread, desserts, call ahead take out 860-889-0150.

LENTEN FISH & CHIPS — Fridays through Friday, March 25, 4:30-6:30 p.m. at Saint Joseph Church, 120 Cliff St., Norwich. $9 for a full meal, $7 for a 1 piece meal, Chowder is $4.

GRISWOLD RECREATIONAL PROGRAM — Every Tuesday and Thursday from 6-7 p.m. Exercise class, low impact aerobics, weights, Pilates, bring mats and weights, open to surrounding towns. Call for more information: 860-376-4741.

CABIN FEVER FLEA MARKET — Saturday, Feb. 27, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Bethel Community United Methodist Church, 1 Rixtown Road and Route 165, Griswold. A variety of vendors, old and new collectibles, antiques, glassware, dishes, Swedish books, kitchenware, attic and basement finds, some children’s items, Chili, Corn Chowder, Cornbread luncheon.

FLEA MARKET — Saturday, March 12, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Divine Providence Church, Silver/Golden Sts. Norwich. Indoor and outdoor, Polish breakfast and lunch, Golabki, Pierogi, Kielbasa, baked goods. Vendors welcome. Call 860-887-4265.

THE THERAPEUTIC FOSTER CARE PROGRAM — This program provides intensive training and support services to mature, stable adults who wish to provide loving homes to children. Our children are typically ages eight to 18 and have emotional and behavioral needs. With our ongoing training, assistance and support you can successfully meet the challenges of foster parenting. Please call the Waterford Country School Foster Care at 860-886-7500 or visit wcsfostercare.org.

OAKDALE KIDS CENTER — Early Learning and Childcare Center, 1127 Old Colchester Road. Oakdale. Announcing official opening of the second location, offering full-time, part-time programs, make an appointment for a tour. Call 860-892-8406.