

Panel Discussion on Opioid Abuse in Darien: If You Missed Others, Catch This One

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Date : September 17, 2017

The First Congregational Church of Darien and Silver Hill Hospital are hosting a panel discussion to address the problem of drugs that plague our community. It will be held at the church at 11:30 a.m., Sunday, Oct. 1, at 11:30am. Although our focus will be on teens, all of us are affected by this crisis.

— This is an announcement from the First Congregational Church of Darien

Two professional panelists, who work in the greater Darien area, will talk about addiction from the scientific, prevention and treatment perspectives. Two people in recovery will share their personal stories. Time is planned for your concerns and questions.

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Our community needs to be well-informed, support each other and learn how to deal with this epidemic.

“Every human being craves intimacy, and if not found in healthy places people will do anything to find it,” said Gary Morello, the church's associate minister and youth leader.

The statistics are startling.

In 2012, 259 million opioids were prescribed by doctors - enough for every American adult to have a bottle (New York Times, May 4, 2017).

A recent White House panel assessed drug abuse as a “public health emergency.” This designation usually is assigned to national disasters such as Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. As we have all heard, prescription drugs are a big part of the problem.

According to Johns Hopkins University Medical School:

- Of the narcotic medications prescribed for recovery from surgery, 42 to 67 percent are not finished and
- Between 41 and 67 percent of these unfinished medications sit in unlocked medicine cabinets, without any plans for disposal.

Local residents may bring their unused medication to the Darien Police Department for proper disposal.

We encourage concerned parents to bring their children. The program will provide much material for fruitful discussions. Call Sally Bassler, (203) 655-9658, with questions.

The Panelists

— **Dr. Eric D. Collins** is physician-in-chief at Silver Hill Hospital in New Canaan which specializes in addiction treatment. He is a graduate of Columbia Medical School, completed his residency at Columbia Presbyterian/New York State Psychiatric Institution and is board certified in addiction psychiatry. He will present specific facts and up-to-date understandings from the scientific standpoint.

— **Allison Fulton** has been the executive director of the Housatonic Valley Coalition Against Drug Abuse since 2002, an organization that gives training, technical assistance and resources to many local prevention centers and towns of western Connecticut. A certified prevention specialist, Allison is a popular keynote speaker and facilitator for “Parenting with Positive Discipline” and other programs. She is a strong supporter of the power of local initiatives that are data-driven and collaborative.

— **Jen H.** is in her late 20's, working as a receptionist as she studies for her degree at Norwalk Community College.

— **Allan Griffin** is a young man who is working for Aware Recovery Care, an addiction center in New

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Haven.

— **Gary Morello** is our associate minister. He is deeply involved in community youth programs.

If You're Going ...

- Sunday, Oct. 1 at 11:30 a.m.
- First Congregational Church, 44 Brookside Road, Darien

For more information, contact Sally Bassler: 203.655.9658