



## NHHS Substance Abuse Prevention and Awareness Efforts

Dear Students, Parents, Guardians, and Community Members,

I am writing with information about school and town work to address substance abuse. As citizens, we are aware of the alarming prevalence of substance abuse nationally and internationally. Unfortunately, it is an epidemic from which North Haven adults and teenagers are not immune. The DEA reports that in the United States, “The numbers are appalling—tens of thousands of Americans will die this year from drug-related deaths, and more than half of these deaths are from heroin and prescription opioid overdoses” (DEA Administrator Chuck Rosenberg). As a school, we confront this situation in two ways: education and intervention.

In terms of education, substance abuse prevention is a state-mandated requirement of our health curriculum. We honor that requirement through a vigorous, frank course of study. Our students learn the health and medical consequence of addiction through their certified health teachers. They experience classroom visits from young men and women who are recovering substance abusers. In addition, all students participate in an impactful annual presentation designed in conjunction with the Town’s Substance Abuse Action Committee. The unifying message of the curriculum, these visitors, and these presentations is that this horrible, life-altering addiction is preventable through informed decision making and treatable once acknowledged.

In terms of intervention, substance abuse is addressed through our team of mental health professionals: two school psychologists, two social workers, and six school counselors. These individuals are qualified to support students and families who may experience substance abuse and its related problems. This support may include the support of local community resources.

At North Haven High School, the town Substance Abuse Action Committee recently hosted a public showing of the FBI documentary *Chasing the Dragon: The Life of an Opioid Addict*. The documentary was accompanied by a panel presentation including FBI and DEA Agents. All students at the high school will experience the same presentation on May 10, 2017. For anyone who missed or would like to preview the documentary, information and the film are here:

Overview:

<http://www.drugfree.org/news-service/fbi-video-chasing-dragon-illustrates-opiate-addictions-toll/>

Documentary link:

<https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/raising-awareness-of-opioid-addiction>

In an effort to educate about the growing epidemic of substance abuse, this documentary, along with a panel discussion will be presented to all North Haven High School on Wednesday May 10<sup>th</sup>.

If you have any questions about this subject, please be in touch with me, Nancy Leddy at North Haven Community Services (203-239-5321), or School Psychologist Lisa Teodosio (203-239-1641). If you wish to opt your child out of the presentation, please be in touch with me directly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'R. Dallai'.

Russell J. Dallai, Ed.D.  
Principal