

# From the community Wheeler Clinic, Bristol Hospital and the Southington Public Library to Sponsor Community Conversation on Opiate and Heroin Use and Misuse

By **Community Contributor jmorrison5**

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**W**heeler Clinic, Bristol Hospital and the Southington Public Library will sponsor a "Community Conversation on Opiates and Heroin" on Wednesday, October 26, 2016 at the Southington Public Library, 255 Main Street, Southington, from 6:30 p.m.-8 p.m. The event is free and open to the public.

The event will feature a six-member panel discussion highlighting what individuals, families and communities need to know about opiates and overdose; where to get help; how to support and set limits for those struggling with addiction; and the value of recovery.

"Communities across the country face an unprecedented addiction crisis linked to heroin and opiate use," said Judith Stonger, MA, CPS, CARC, vice president of Prevention, Wellness and Recovery for Wheeler. "We encourage local residents to attend this forum to learn the facts, engage in meaningful dialog and find out more about available treatment and recovery resources."

"The issue of drug abuse, especially heroin, was the number one concern raised by participants at the Library's recent Community Forum," said Sue Smayda, library director, Southington Public Library. "We hope that parents of young people and anyone interested in the health and well-being of our community will attend this important program to find out how we can work together to find ways to alleviate this growing threat."

Stonger will facilitate the discussion. Panelists include:

- Rebecca Colasanto, LCSW, director of clinical operations, Bristol Hospital and Health Care Group, Inc. Counseling Center
- Anne Thompson, LPC, associate director, Adult Outpatient Services, Wheeler Clinic
- Rebecca Allen, MPH, senior program manager, Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery
- Manoharan Nachiyappan, MD, medical director of Behavioral Health Services, Bristol Hospital
- Kelly Leppard, CPS, youth prevention coordinator, Southington STEPS Coalition
- Benjamin Grippo, counselor, Hartford Dispensary/Bristol

The event also will include information about:

Wheeler's Medication-Assisted Treatment Programs

Wheeler offers an extensive continuum of substance abuse treatment and intervention services, including

medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for opioid and alcohol addiction. The organization's comprehensive array of addiction services offer a flexible combination of in-home, outpatient and family intervention programs that serve the needs of thousands of individuals annually. Information about Wheeler's MAT programs, including types of treatment offered at specific Wheeler locations, will be available. Wheeler's Medical Director of Addiction Services, Alkesh N. Patel, MD, FASAM, also will be in attendance.

#### Wheeler's Southington Health Outreach Project

Wheeler's Southington Health Outreach Project Senior Health Outreach Coordinator, Justine Micalizzi, will attend the event and provide information about the Southington Health Outreach Project, which connects Southington residents to behavioral health and primary care services, as well as other community resources. The project employs a three-tiered approach to serving individuals and families in this community, including outreach and health education; system navigation assistance; and efforts to reduce barriers to care such as transportation, child care concerns and others. The Southington Health Outreach Project is funded by the Bradley Henry Barnes and Leila Upson Barnes Memorial Trust at the Main Street Community Foundation.

The public is invited to attend the October 26th event. Registration is required as space is limited. To register, visit [southingtonlibrary.org](http://southingtonlibrary.org) and click on Calendar of Events, or call the Reference Department at 860.628.0947, ext. 6552. For questions, please email [info@wheelerclinic.org](mailto:info@wheelerclinic.org).

#### About Bristol Hospital:

Founded in 1921, Bristol Hospital is the leading health provider for people who live and work in the Greater Bristol area. Proud of its achievements in service excellence, Bristol Hospital has earned national recognition for its commitment to providing outstanding patient care. Bristol Hospital has 154 licensed beds and offers a complete range of patient services including a first-rate emergency center that cares for more than 40,000 patients each year. Bristol Hospital achieved ANCC Magnet Recognition® in July 2015 from the American Nurses Credentialing Center.

#### About Wheeler Clinic:

Wheeler provides comprehensive solutions that address complex health issues, providing individuals, families and communities with accessible, innovative care that encourages recovery, health and growth at all stages of life. Our integrated approach to primary and behavioral health, education and recovery creates measurable results, positive outcomes and hopeful tomorrows for more than 30,000 individuals across Connecticut each year. Learn more: [www.wheelerclinic.org](http://www.wheelerclinic.org).

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