

BRENDA MORI, Clerk  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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March 12, 2021

BATH -- The ongoing battle against substance abuse continues in Steuben County, with the first virtual forum on Zoom hosted by the Steuben Prevention Coalition Opioid Committee and slated for 7-8 pm, March 18.

That battle has faced unforeseen challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, with more traditional support systems and rehabilitation service hampered by social distancing protocols and compounded by the isolation and stress many addicts already experience.

Addiction claimed the lives of nine county residents last year, with at least 141 overdoses reported. Actual reports are limited due to confidentiality constraints.

Law enforcement agencies also have been affected by the pandemic's social restrictions and the state's court and bail reforms which have made investigations by the county's task force more difficult, county District Attorney Brooks Baker recently told the county Legislature's Public Safety and Corrections Committee.

Those challenges can be met head-on through the first virtual forum March 18, and the active social networking campaign promoting available resources and support, organizers say.

The forum will feature comments from local authorities, followed by a question and answer session. Anonymity will be assured at the Zoom meeting sign-in, Opioid Committee Coordinator Connie Terry said.

Just as the pandemic has produced unknown consequences, the committee knows its first virtual forum is untried, and its effectiveness is yet unknown.

"We don't know," Terry said. "But we never will know if we don't try."

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7-8 pm, March 18

A Virtual Community Forum: Community Support for Recovery During the Pandemic: A closer look at Steuben County, focusing on the opioid epidemic, treatment, mental health and more

Sponsored by the Steuben Prevention Coalition Opioid Committee

<https://zoom.us/j/94656419115?pwd=L1lxUkdLam9vRC9oMXczdUtMODNZZz09>

Meeting ID: 946 5641 9115 Passcode: 408871

One tap mobile +16465588656,,94656419115#,,,,\*408871# US (New York)

Dial by your location +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

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*Media/press advisory – the three contacts listed above would be glad to be interviewed on this topic. All three are well-versed in the issue of substance abuse and the compelling need to serve people suffering from its effects.*