



# ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATIVE NEWS

ULSTER COUNTY NEWS INFORMATION  
OFFICE OF ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE  
244 FAIR STREET  
KINGSTON, NEW YORK, 12401

PHONE: 845.340-3900  
FAX: 845.340.3651  
www.co.ulster.ny.us  
[www.ulstercountyny.gov](http://www.ulstercountyny.gov)

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### WHERE THERE'S HELP THERE'S HOPE: A HEROIN & OPIOID COMMUNITY AWARENESS FORUM

Kingston, NY – “To truly address a problem of this magnitude, you must first recognize that there is a problem, gather the experts together and engage the community in developing solutions,” said Ulster County Legislative Chairman Ken Ronk.

The Ulster County Legislature and SUNY Ulster have joined forces with the Ulster Coalition Against Narcotics (UCAN) Task Force to sponsor a free community awareness forum **“Where There’s Help There’s Hope”** on Wednesday, April 26 at 6:00 PM in the John Quimby Theater at the SUNY Ulster Campus in Stone Ridge.

“Opioid addiction has affected countless families and individuals across New York State,” said Senator George Amedore. “It is imperative that we continue to bring attention to this issue and work to ensure that all New Yorkers who struggle with addiction will be connected with treatment and recovery services. Ulster Coalition Against Narcotics has been a leader in the fight against heroin and opioid addiction. The strong presence they provide in Ulster County has contributed to the momentum, attention, and resources needed to effectively combat the addiction and opioid crisis we are battling. I encourage everyone to attend this important community forum.”

UCAN issued a report two years ago that received state and national recognition. That report discussed the importance of community outreach and involvement.

“UCAN has been gearing up for this important public outreach event for almost two years. We’ve done diligent and extensive research and familiarized ourselves with the issue of Substance Use Disorder (SUD) and how it is affecting Ulster County communities in order to provide the best and most current information. This is a well planned community focused forum with speakers who are respected in their fields. I encourage everyone to attend,” urged UCAN Chairman Lou Klein.

Speakers will include

- **New York State Senator George Amedore**, Chairman of the NYS Senate Standing Committee on Alcoholism & Substance Abuse and Co-Chair of the bipartisan Joint Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction;

- **Dr. Raymond Harvey**, Step One Program, will explain the Science of Substance Use Disorder;
- **Melissa Trent, Esq.**, Legal Action Center, will highlight the rights of individuals with SUD
- **Cortney Lovell**, Recovery Advocate, will offer inspiration and encouragement as an individual in long term recovery

The forum is designed for everyone and is expected to draw professionals, educators, families, individuals in recovery and those seeking assistance. Time has been set aside for an informal question and answer session with the speakers, and several outstanding solution-based programs in Ulster County will be recognized.

More than a dozen community advocate and assistance programs will be on hand with information on their services and how to contact them. “These are services that we all hope and pray we will never need,” said Legislator Mary Wawro, Chair of the Ulster County Legislature’s Standing Committee on Legislative Programs, Education and Community Services, and member of UCAN. “All too often people don’t know where to turn when a tragedy touches their life. We want everyone to know that there is help for them right here in Ulster County.”

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