

February 2023



## SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION PARTNERSHIP MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

This is the monthly newsletter of the SUPP Coalition. We share information and updates central to our mission: *To strengthen our communities to support alcohol and drug free youth in Lincoln County.*

### A Letter from Healthy Lincoln County:

Dear Partners,

For me, February is the hardest month. The cozy briskness of Autumn and Solstice are behind me, but spring is still many weeks away. The items in this month's newsletter are correspondingly heavy. We are in a winter of loss and pain. 716 Mainers lost their lives to overdose last year and now we learn that the drug supply is only getting more contaminated by increasingly scary poisons. People in our own backyards are living in extremely challenging conditions due to a lack of affordable housing. Young people are experiencing ever more stress and uncertainty and sometimes it seems like there is so little we can do to help them. One of the things we can do is to keep informed about the dangers in our environment and the realities of our economy and pass that knowledge to others. We can and we must do this, but it still doesn't feel like enough.

I did have one glimmer of spring last week, when I went to Hidden Valley to set up the new StoryWalk. I was focused on the physical task at hand, so it came as a pleasant surprise when I found myself walking in the woods with the artist Ashley Bryan. Ever since I first visited Cranberry Island in 2010, I've admired Bryan's work, for his manifold talents but even more so for his simple kindness and generosity of spirit. It was weird and wonderful to literally deconstruct his book about fear and pin each piece of it to a tree. The task was more difficult than I anticipated but the woods were quiet, and the air was cold. Bryan was a friendly presence as I made my way down the trail. Until all the pages were up, and he was gone off among the trees. The process was a reminder to keep my eyes on the work, to keep putting one foot in front of the other. We can't always fix the world, but we can do the work of today and leave a trail for others to follow.

Will

**NEXT SUPP MEETING: February 21st 2-3pm**

**We can't wait to see you at the next SUPP call!**

Please join us on **Tuesday, February 21st from 2-3pm** for our next SUPP gathering. This meeting will take place via **ZOOM**. We will reconvene in-person meetings in March.

Zoom information below:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88304959155?pwd=K0J1K1R1VTZpRTU5TC82RTJtYUc2dz09>

Meeting ID: 883 0495 9155

Passcode: 310038

# Upcoming Meeting Schedule

We listened to the coalition, and we're bringing back both in-person and zoom (hybrid) meetings.

As always, you can find previous meeting agendas and minutes can be found here:

[SUPP Agendas and Minutes](#)

Check out what the group has been chatting about!

Tuesday, March 21st, 2 - 3 P.M.	Wiscasset	Wiscasset Community Center
Tuesday, April 18th, 2 - 3 P.M.	Boothbay	Boothbay YMCA
Tuesday, May 16th, 2 - 3 P.M.	Damariscotta	CLC YMCA
Tuesday, June 20th, 2 - 3 P.M.	Waldoboro	Waldoboro Town Office, (please check in at Front Desk)
Tuesday, July 18th, 2 - 3 P.M.	Wiscasset	Wiscasset Community Center
Tuesday, August 15th, 2 - 3 P.M.	Boothbay	Boothbay YMCA
Tuesday, September, 19th, 2 - 3 P.M.	Damariscotta	CLC YMCA

## A Point In Time

Every year on a Tuesday night in January, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development holds its Point-In-Time (PIT) Count, a census of Americans experiencing homelessness. The idea is to take a slice out of time, one cold night in the long winter, and get an accurate sense of the number of unhoused Americans living through it.

HLC volunteered to represent Lincoln County in the Midcoast district and find out what the housing landscape really looks like. Jess Breithaupt martialed her incredible network of givers and movers to round up a ton of supplies that could be brought to these neighbors of ours so that we wouldn't leave them empty handed after we counted them. The amount of donations we received from around the county was heartening and the great people who volunteered their time to help us were inspiring. We were able to make a real difference in someone's day even as we gleaned data that might make things better in the long run. We gave out eight Narcan kits to those who might use them to save a life, piloting the mobile Narcan unit we've been kicking around in our thoughts.



We counted twenty-one families that qualified to be counted under the PIT. Here in Lincoln County they tend to be living in "vehicles," stationary campers that aren't winterized, that sometimes lack water, heat, or electricity. They don't fit a certain bill. We wouldn't read the standardized HUD questions off a script, but we did have real conversations with folks, and we learned about what they are facing. Some struggle with Substance Use Disorder, some don't. Some are new to their current situation while others have lived this way their whole life. All expressed gratitude for the help we got them, but that wasn't the point. They were mostly happy to talk with someone, to be seen and recognized and to register their pride and their love. Most talked about their loved ones and pointed us to others they felt were more in need of help.

The PIT Count is over for the year, but HLC isn't finished. Housing insecurity isn't going anywhere so we'll be packing up the van every month and heading out to meet people, wherever they may be staying. We'll be building on the network we've started and putting people first at every point in time.





## StoryWalk at HVNC

Do you like to walk and read stories at the same time? If you do, head to Midcoast Conservancy's [Hidden Valley Nature Center](#) this February to see the new StoryWalk!

StoryWalk is a program first developed by librarians in Montpelier, VT to bring together two of the healthiest things: reading stories and taking a walk outside. The pages of a storybook are laminated and displayed in wooden boxes along a walking trail so that families can enjoy movement and share story time all at once. There's something magical about experiencing a story spread out in physical space, about giving your walk the intentional structure of a narrative.



HLC will be switching out the book on a regular basis, so stay tuned for what comes next!

The new story is [Can't Scare Me!](#), a children's classic by Maine artist and author, [Ashley Bryan](#). It tells the story of a fearless, musical young boy who does not heed his grandmother's sage advice. It gets him into trouble, and we learn the value of a little bit of healthy fear. To see what happens—and Bryan's masterful illustrations—take a walk!

## What You Need to Know About Nitazenes and Xylazine



[Nitazenes](#) are a family of **synthetic opioids** including isotonitazene, which is the most common of them, and is often referred to as 'ISO' or simply called **nitazene**. These synthetics are like fentanyl except that that they can be up to forty times stronger. Not four times stronger, FORTY times stronger than the drug that is already killing over a hundred thousand Americans each year. Like fentanyl, they are increasingly found mixed in with other drugs like heroin, methamphetamine, and cocaine, but also



**Xylazine**, often referred to as 'tranq,' is a veterinary tranquilizer with no approved human use. It is also commonly found mixed in with other drugs. The presence of xylazine **increases the risk of overdosing on fentanyl** and complicates the symptoms. Xylazine is not an opioid, so **naloxone cannot reverse its effects**.

pressed into **counterfeit pills**. Unlike fentanyl, they have never been approved by the FDA and have no established medical use. The DEA first identified them in the Midwest in 2019, but in January [reported](#) a surge of overdoses in the D.C. area, a surge which is now spreading north and south along the eastern seaboard. Naloxone can reverse the effects of an overdose by nitazenes, but the high potency means more naloxone is required in each case. Where a typical fentanyl overdose can be reversed by one or two Narcan kits, a Nitazene overdose might take four or five. The more Narcan needed, the less likely it is that enough will be immediately available to save life. This increases the urgency of having Narcan present and familiar in diverse locations.

According to the New Hampshire [Department of Safety](#), “there is no pharmaceutical antidote specific to xylazine.” The Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center at the University of Maine [reports](#) that xylazine was present in 10% of Maine overdoses in 2021. That is the most recent available Maine statistic, but occurrences of xylazine are only increasing around New England.

Emergency responders still recommend using Narcan on any suspected overdose patient. Most xylazine overdoses are also opioid overdoses so Narcan is still an important tool. But the emergence of these new substances is fueling the ongoing arms race against overdose and synthetic drugs.

## One Pill Can Kill

The two new drugs described above are scary and important to track, but it's vital to remember that fentanyl is still the leading cause of overdose by far. The DEA and a California-based organization called [Song For Charlie](#) are leading a new campaign: One Pill Can Kill. It's a simple, memorable catchphrase anyone can use when talking with kids about proscription drugs.



Many young people assume that it is safer to try pills than to experiment with street drugs like cocaine or heroin. Wrong. Fentanyl is now commonly found in counterfeit pills that are made to look like proscription drugs. Young people often buy these pills on social media sites like Snapchat or get them through a friend who thinks they know what they have but didn't obtain them through a legal source. There are many documented cases where a young person has died the first time they experimented with taking a pill they thought was from a trusted source. A pill might look like Xanax or Adderall but if you got it under the table there is a dangerously high chance it has fentanyl in it. According to Song For Charlie “You can't trust a single pill you buy online, through social media, or from a friend. Period.” The only way to safely take a pill is to get it through a licensed pharmacy with a prescription from your doctor.

Check out this powerful video by Song For Charlie to learn more about the danger of counterfeit pills.



## 716 Candles

HLC will be partnering with the artist and organizer Peter Bruun to recognize International Overdose Awareness Day on August 31st. The observance will be called *716 Candles*, so named in remembrance of the 716 Mainers lost to fatal overdose in 2022. Four separate events will take place across Lincoln County, in Wiscasset, Boothbay Harbor, Damariscotta, and Waldoboro, bringing together community members with artists, musicians, and storytellers to honor both the lost and the living. The events will be focused on destigmatizing substance use and overdose by humanizing those affected by them, and on recognizing that Substance Use Disorder is not a moral failing but a medical condition and a public health concern. Community spaces will be created for people to come together to share, remember, heal, and learn.





A Planning Group composed of volunteers will engage in a community-based organizing process emphasizing participation and inclusivity, and the resulting events will be authentic collaborations involving a diverse cross-section of the community.

The project was initiated by Bruun, a Damariscotta-based artist originally from Baltimore, where he did similar work. After losing his daughter Elisif to overdose in 2014, Bruun became active in the fight to destigmatize Substance Use Disorder, increase awareness of and access to support services, and promote healing through the sharing of art and story. Before moving to Maine, through his [New Day Campaign](#), he produced dozens of events and exhibitions challenging stigma and promoting compassion around mental illness and substance use. On August 31, 2020, he joined with others in the Boothbay region, presenting an event named *132 Candles*.

Let's pause to consider the significance of these numbers: whether it's 132 (the number of overdose deaths in the first part of 2020), or 716 (the total number of Mainers lost in 2022), each individual number represents a tragic loss leaving loved ones in grief and pain.

Those interested in joining the community planning process should [visit the HLC website](#) to learn more and [complete a short survey](#).

## What's New at Healthy Lincoln County?

### Spring 2023 Adult Ed Narcan Trainings



March 7th, 6 P.M. - 7 P.M. Medomak Valley High  
March 14th, 6 P.M. - 7 P.M. Windsor Elementary  
March 21st, 6 P.M. - 7 P.M. Medomak Valley High  
March 28th, 6 P.M. - 7 P.M. Whitefield Elementary  
April 4th, 6 P.M. - 7 P.M. Boothbay Region High  
April 11th 6 P.M. - 7 P.M. Edgecomb Eddy School  
May 2nd, 6 P.M. - 7 P.M. Great Salt Bay School

### HLC's FREE Narcan course is returning to CLC & Midcoast Adult Education this spring!

Tuesday nights at 6 P.M. from March to May we will be offering Narcan training classes at various schools around the county. Click [here](#) to see the course catalogue and sign up!



### Project Sticker Shock Returns to Damariscotta

On February 1<sup>st</sup> CLC YMCA Teen Leaders teamed up with local law enforcement to place awareness stickers on retail liquor products at six different stores in Damariscotta. The stickers remind adults not to purchase alcohol for minors. The student-led effort promotes awareness of furnishing laws and confronts the tolerance of underage drinking, which is both less common and more harmful than typically imagined. This means that while most teens don't drink, those that do are in need of our care and preventative messaging. Additional sticker shock events will be taking in place in Lincoln County later in April and May.



## New and Upcoming Opportunities

[OUT Maine is hosting in-person professional development trainings!](#)

During March OUT Maine will be presenting a number of live in-person trainings for professionals working with LGBTQ+ youth. Locations include Augusta and Bangor. Some are free and some have fees!

Join the 716 Candles Planning Group! We are seeking community organizers to help orchestrate this important series of events. To sign up please [take this short survey](#), and either Will or Peter will contact you soon.

[Sign up](#) for FREE Adult Ed Narcan training!

Here is February's [Food Pantry Calendar](#).

Hit the trails at [Hidden Valley Nature Center](#) with [affordable equipment rentals](#).

[Exciting Winter Activities at Coastal Rivers Land Trust!](#) See March offerings!

Here is a [list of other great winter resources](#) available here in Lincoln County.

**NAMI Maine Helpline:** Phone: 1-800-464-5767, press 1  
Email: [helpline@namimaine.org](mailto:helpline@namimaine.org)

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** 988  
(press 1 for the Veteran Crisis Line)

**Maine Crisis Hotline:** 888-568-1112 (text or call)

**Crisis Text Line:** Text HOME to 741-741

**Maine Intentional Warmline:** 1-866-771-9276

**For statewide assistance call:** 207-221-8198



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STAY CONNECTED



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