

Falmouth Commission on Substance Use (FCSU)

Mission statement:

To prevent substance abuse among Falmouth's citizens, provide information and education to the community and to promote the development and availability of a continuum of substance abuse services for all Falmouth residents.

Members:

- Beverly Costa-Ciavola
- Samantha Bauer
- Richard Corey, Jr.
- Rabbi Elias Lieberman
- Dennis Lyons, Chair

Major responsibility of FCSU:

The FSUC is engaged in several areas relating to the prevention of substance misuse and abuse in Falmouth. One of the most important efforts is advising on the distribution of statewide abatement funding to organizations providing substance use recovery services, harm reduction, prevention, and access to treatment for residents of the Town and other members of the Falmouth community.

As of the end of this fiscal year 2024 the town has received \$339,318 in funds to mitigate the impacts of the opioid crisis and further the mission of the Commission and the guidelines set forth by the state approved State-Subdivision Agreement for distribution of these funds.

To identify areas of greatest need, the Commission, along with the Human Services Department, engaged a series of community outreach events in 2023 to assess the various needs of the Falmouth community and determine where funding should be directed. In June 2023 a large Community Conversation was held followed by 6 smaller focus groups in the late summer and Fall of 2023. The purpose of these events was to obtain input and feedback from the community on how they, and the community at large, have been impacted by the opioid crisis and how Falmouth's opioid abatement funds should be used. The Commission collected information based on the lived and living experiences of residents and perspectives of the community. All of this led to meaningful community input well worth the time and effort spent, and critical to determining the most appropriate use of the abatement funding.

A summary of last year's Community Engagement process can be found on the Town's website <https://www.falmouthma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/16363/FCSU-Comm-Engagement-Summary>

Grant process:

In March 2024 the Town, through the Human Services Department, began its solicitation of opioid abatement funding applications and received 8 applications. Each application was reviewed and scored by a 5-member Opioid Abatement Working Group which included the Human Services Director, two members of the Human Services Committee, and two members of the Substance Use Commission. A scoring rubric provided with the application materials was used to evaluate each application.

Subsequently, the Working Group convened in person to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each application. These discussions were thorough and deliberate, resulting in 5 recommendations that they determined strongly aligned with our community's needs.

Subsequently, the Commission voted unanimously to support the Working Group's recommendation that the Town fund the following agencies/projects:

Grantee summary:

- **WellStrong** - \$25,000 for a Peer Wellness Coaching Program. A SAMHSA developed evidence-based program to support individuals in recovery from substance use disorder.

- **Behavioral Health Innovators: APG/Recovery Build** - \$18,500 to support their outpatient treatment and recovery after-school program for youth age 13-18.
- **Duffy Health Center** - \$25,000 to support their mobile outreach program R.E.A.C.H (Respectful, Equitable, Access to Compassionate Healthcare). This program has 3 staff members: A Recovery Support Navigator, Case Manager, and Harm Reductionist.
- **Parents Supporting Parents** - \$25,000 for Sober Living Scholarships and Support Services Program for Falmouth residents.
- **Aids Support Group of Cape Cod** - \$25,000 to support their community-based harm reduction services which includes community Narcan training and distribution, Sober/recovery home Narcan training and distribution, Fentanyl and Xylazine test strip education and training, HIV/HCV screening and linkages to care, mobile outreach, short term health navigation, POST= post overdose support team, and stocking and monitoring municipal SamBoxes (opioid overdose rescue boxes).
- **Total rewarded** \$ 118,500

Events:

The FCSU also sponsored the annual International Overdose Awareness event in Falmouth on August 31, 2023 on the Falmouth Village Green. The event is an opportunity to remember and honor lives lost to substance use disorder, and to acknowledge those who all too often remain unseen members of our community. The Commission aims to make this a yearly sponsored event and went on to host again on August 31, 2024 which was attended by some 60 advocates, parents, family members and friends of those who had passed away in our community from substance use disorder.

Recognition:

The Commission wishes to thank outgoing Chairperson Beverly Costa-Ciavola for her 7 years of leadership on the Commission.

Respectfully submitted,
Dennis G. Lyons RPh
Chairman