



Our mission is to meet the need for comprehensive alcohol and drug abuse awareness planning and programming to create community-level change in Manalapan Township and Englishtown Borough.

Project ZERO

Problem Statement: There continues to be situations and consequences in the communities of Manalapan and Englishtown involving drugs and alcohol.

Addiction: Drug and alcohol abuse has been a problem for generations and the efforts to reduce the number of people becoming addicted to drugs and alcohol has been around just as long. In the past two decades, research has increasingly supported the view that addiction is a disease of the brain, though this has not been embraced universally. Though it may be recognized as a disease, the use of drugs and alcohol to satisfy an addiction still represents a behavior that may be unlawful and subject to punishment. Further, the use of drugs and alcohol to satisfy an addiction puts oneself and others at extreme risk of injury or death. It is estimated that 8-10% of people age 12 years of age and older in the United States (20-22 million people) are addicted to alcohol or other drugs.

Underlying Trends: There is substantial data that demonstrates drug and alcohol use is a major problem affecting large segments of the United States (US), New Jersey (NJ), Monmouth County (MC) and Manalapan and Englishtown communities. On a national scale, there has been a significant increase in the number of persons seeking treatment for opioid substance abuse. Consistent with this increase has been the increasing number of prescriptions for pain medication and a dramatic swing in the availability of inexpensive heroin outside of its historic presence in inner urban environments. It is believed that 80% of persons who become addicted to heroin started with abuse of prescription painkiller medications which includes abuse of medications prescribed for the person who later becomes addicted. There also remains high marijuana and alcohol use rates in school age youth.

Heroin and Opiates: In the past 10 years there has been an explosive growth of heroin and heroin-related use in the US. Specific trends include:

- Heroin-related overdose deaths in the US have nearly doubled between 2011 and 2013 from 1.4 to 2.7 per 100,000 people.
- In 2013 there were 8200 heroin-related overdoses in the US.
- Between the two year periods of 2002-04 and 2011-13, heroin use among women doubled from 0.8 women to 1.6 women per 100,000 in the US.
- During the same measurement periods, male users saw a 50% increase from 2.4 to 3.6 per 100,000 men.



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- Heroin - 66
- Other opiates - 16
- Marijuana/Hashish - 26

- Other drugs - 9
- Unknown - 47

Police statistics for the Manalapan and Englishtown (combined) are as follows:

- 10 successful Nalaxone (Narcan) administrations
- 13 drug influence evaluations
- 158 arrests involving drugs
- 55 driving while under the influence (DUI) arrests

Alliance Role: The Manalapan-Englishtown Community Alliance to Prevent Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (“Alliance”) exists to educate and inform the community about the dangers and consequences of alcohol and drug abuse. The Alliance is a community based organization, owned and directed by the community. The Alliance has adopted the mission to plan programming to increase awareness and create community level change in Manalapan and Englishtown. The Alliance exists with funding, both cash and in-kind, supplied by Manalapan Township and through fundraising.

Alliance Actions: In 2013 the Alliance redirected a large percentage of its resources to increasing the awareness of the dangers and consequences of heroin and other opiates. In 2014 the Alliance sponsored 2 community forums focused on this topic. It also increased the value of its partnership with the Manalapan High School during this time with support of High School activities in the student body. In 2015 the Alliance developed a Run event to help increase awareness of itself and its mission. It also changed its strategy to focus on presentations to smaller groups. By the end of the year it had made presentations to 8 community groups and participated in 7 community events and activities. The Alliance expects to continue its efforts working in smaller environments in 2016.

Project ZERO: The Alliance is starting a new initiative in 2016 entitled *Project ZERO: Eliminating Substance Abuse Here in Manalapan and Englishtown*. This initiative intends to re-set the narrative in Manalapan and Englishtown. The Alliance wants the narrative to be that we - the communities of Manalapan and Englishtown - don’t accept incidents of illicit drug use or excessive alcohol consumption. Any such situation is unacceptable - in the strict interpretation of what is acceptable and what is not. The Alliance is not establishing goals of zero incidents of drug use or zero number of drug arrests or zero number of arrests for driving under the influence. Instead, it wants the conversation to be that any incident is unacceptable and to breed community endorsement and agreement on this principle.

The Alliance will promote this project throughout the communities including businesses, organizations, governments and residents. The Alliance will be asking these entities of the communities to endorse and support Project ZERO. That by endorsing and supporting Project ZERO, they too agree, that any incident of substance abuse or excessive alcohol use is unacceptable.

The Alliance expects to demonstrate and enhance its partnership with these entities with the distribution of branded materials that can be displayed and shared with customers, clients and friends. The materials being considered include decals/stickers, buttons, magnets, placards, napkins and car fresheners.

The Alliance is also investigating the use of homemade videos to show how individuals, businesses and groups “Stand with” Project ZERO. Embracing the success of the ice bucket challenge - the Alliance is looking at the use of smartphone technology to film people “Standing With Project ZERO”. The Alliance will produce placards for use in these video projects.

- The 18-25 years age group experienced the highest age group increase (109%) from 2002-04 to 2011-13.
- In 2013 an estimated 517,000 people in the US reported some level of past heroin use or dependence which represents a 150% increase since 2007.

NJ specific trends are as follows:

- Between 2002-04 and 2011-13, the heroin-related death rate in NJ was higher than the US rate - rising from 3.7 to 6.25 per 100,000 persons and increasing to 7.5 in 2014.
- There have been 5217 heroin related deaths and 52,271 drug arrests in NJ from 2004-2014.
- Heroin-related deaths have increased from 306 in 2010 to 781 in 2014.

In Monmouth County the number of overdoses attributed to heroin and other opiates has climbed to 72 in 2014. In April 2014 NJ police departments were granted approval to use naloxone (narcan) to reverse persons found to be overdosed due to drugs. Since the inception of the program through the end of 2015, naloxone has been administered over 600 times in Monmouth and Ocean Counties with approximately 90% success (revival) rate.

Marijuana: Marijuana is the most commonly used illicit drug (19.8 million past-month users) according to the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. In that year, marijuana was used by 81% of current illicit drug users and was the only drug used by 64.7% of the same group. In juveniles, on a national scale, in 2014, 11.7% of 8th graders reported marijuana use in the past year and 6.5% report being a current user. The rates increase with school age, topping at 35.1% of 12th graders reported using marijuana in the past year and 21.2% report being current users. In 2014, 68.1% of High School seniors did not view regular marijuana smoking as harmful.

Marijuana use is also significant in drug-related visits to emergency departments. In 2011, there were almost 456,000 emergency room visits in which marijuana was reported on the medical record. This was a 21% increase from 2009.

Alcohol: Alcohol overuse is a significant problem. Following are significant national findings related to the consumption of large enough amounts of alcohol to represent a problem:

- In the US almost 25% of adults over the age of 18 reported at least one heavy (5 or more drinks for men and 4 or more for women) drinking day in 2014.
- In the US There were over 29,000 alcohol-induced deaths - excluding accidents and homicides - in 2013.
- In the US There were 10,076 alcohol-impaired driving fatalities in 2013 - which represents over 30% of overall driving fatalities.
- In the US 15% of students reported they drank alcohol (more than a few sips) prior to age 13 years in a 2013 national survey.
- In NJ 50% of 9th graders reported having at least 1 alcohol drink in their lifetime in a 2013 national survey.
- In NJ almost 40% of high school seniors reported having at least 5 drinks in a row on 1 day within 30 days of the survey in a 2013 national survey.

Manalapan and Englishtown Experiences: The following data is specific to Manalapan and Englishtown - and represents combined numbers:

- The number of residents from the 2 towns admitted for treatment of alcohol use in 2014 - 36
- The number of residents from the 2 towns admitted for treatment of drug use in 2014 - 181
- The breakdown by primary drug of residents being admitted for treatment in 2014 is as follows:
 - Alcohol - 36
 - Cocaine/Crack - 17

The Alliance has developed a number of measures to define what ZERO means. A few examples include:

- ZERO amount of school suspensions due to drugs or alcohol
- ZERO number of lives lost due to drugs or alcohol
- ZERO number of futures destroyed because of drugs or alcohol
- ZERO shame for admitting an addiction or problem
- ZERO number of unnecessary or unused medications residing in medicine cabinets

It is expected that such measures will be used and displayed throughout this initiative to help identify what ZERO means in the context of this project.

Conclusion: The Alliance is hopeful that Project ZERO will be an identifiable initiative in the communities of Manalapan and Englishtown to bring attention to alcohol and drug abuse. The Alliance is hopeful that the Project will be embraced by the communities and its message widely distributed. Ultimately, the Alliance is hopeful that through this project there will be a measurable decrease in the number of incidents involving drugs and alcohol overuse and the consequences thereof in Manalapan and Englishtown.

For more information on Project ZERO or the Manalapan-Englishtown Community Alliance to Prevent Alcoholism and Drug Abuse or to get involved in the Project or Alliance please contact the Manalapan Health Department at 732-446-8345 or health@mtnj.org.