

Greenwich Tackles Opioid, Heroin Addiction With New Community Study

by [Jay Polansky](#) 03/01/2016

First Selectman Peter Tesei announced a new study to address opioid and heroin addiction during a meeting at Greenwich Town Hall on Monday.



GREENWICH, Conn. — Opioid addiction has touched communities across the nation. Greenwich, where five people died of drug overdoses last year, is no exception, according to town officials.

“This is a serious public health problem that cuts across all socioeconomic groups,” Social Services Commissioner Alan Barry said during a meeting Monday at Greenwich Town Hall. “Drug overdose is the leading cause of accidental death in the U.S., with opioid addiction contributing to 62 percent of the overdoses.”

Greenwich is combatting the problem with a new study to determine the extent of opioid and heroin addiction within the community. Officials said the study, which will be conducted by Liberation Programs and the town's Department of Social Services, is projected to be completed by May.

Officials said they have some data on opioid overdoses in Greenwich, but they need more information to provide better addiction prevention and treatment plans.

The study has three main goals:

- Understand to what extent residents have tried heroin or other opiates and at what frequency levels;
- Compile information regarding the values, beliefs and perceptions of risk and substance use held by youths, parents, teachers and other leaders and service providers in the community;

- Learn how other service providers perceive and are affected by the problem.

First Selectman Peter Tesei, who has made addressing addiction one his top priorities, said the issue has affected most residents of Greenwich.

“I don’t think that there's any one individual or any family who has not been exposed to or knows someone who has had the unfortunate experience of becoming addicted,” he said.

Other towns in Fairfield County and the state, including [New Canaan](#) , have held meetings to address the growing problem of opioid addiction. In 2015, Connecticut had 723 accidental overdoses, according to Barry.

Officials said those who wish to share their thoughts on the study can send an email to stopaddictionnow@liberationprograms.org. Those who are struggling with addiction and need help today can call 203-354-6901.