



**2021 - 2022**

**ANNUAL**

**REPORT**

# Chairperson's Remarks

“ Through state and federal grants SERAC engages and unites individuals and communities around issues related to addiction and mental well-being across the behavioral health continuum. A new initiative this year has expanded training for business and organizations to become Recovery Friendly Workplaces. Much of the work is accomplished through funding directed to communities with SERAC employees working with these communities to identify and address needs related to addictions, suicide and mental health. Together these services have impacted children, youth and families from across 41 communities across Eastern Connecticut. ”

— *Joe Radway*

## Regional Gambling Team

### Awareness and Prevention Initiatives

SERAC's Regional Gambling Awareness Team meets quarterly to discuss regional and local needs, gaps, services, and initiatives. SERAC partners and engages community leaders in problem gambling prevention, treatment, and recovery and to integrate problem gambling awareness and advocacy into behavioral health programs. SERAC conducted four Community Awareness Program (CAP) trainings with seventy people attending. This year we utilized our Wellness TVs, local radio stations, gas stations, placemats at local restaurants and SEAT buses to increase problem gambling awareness and promote Connecticut Council on Problem Gambling's helpline number. All regional Youth Service Advisory Boards received problem gambling and gaming information. SERAC hosted two gambling-focused trainings, To the Moon: A Virtual Introduction to Cryptocurrency and Discovering the Synergy Between Problem Gambling and Substance Misuse Prevention with over 100 people in attendance.

# State Opioid Response

Region 3 has seven State Opioid Response mini grantees who work to implement substance abuse prevention and behavioral health promotion initiatives; host Question, Persuade & Refer (QPR)/Narcan trainings; promote state-wide opioid awareness campaigns; and participate in Drug Take Back Days. This year, SERAC delivered over 60 QPR trainings and disseminated over 600 boxes of Narcan. Thirteen people were certified by SERAC to teach others how to administer Narcan.

Recovery Friendly Workplace (RFW): This state initiative is dovetailed into the State Opioid Response grant and partners the Regional Behavioral Health Action Organization with Department of Labor, Department of Public Health, and Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. Connecticut's Recovery Friendly Workplace (RFW) Initiative challenges stigma and empowers workplaces to provide support for employees in recovery and all those impacted by substance use disorder. SERAC supports employers in their efforts to create a healthier workplace environment resulting in a safer work environment, positive workplace culture, and resources available to employees and their families. SERAC celebrates the addition of Beer'd Brewing and Keith's Appliances to our Recovery Friendly Workplace partnership. Several other workplaces are currently in the process to receive their certification and we look forward to announcing them in the future. If you are interested in making your workplace Recovery Friendly, please contact SERAC for more information.

Catchment Area Councils: Connecticut is divided into 23 Catchment Area Councils with 4 in the Eastern region. This citizen body consisting of those receiving services, family members, providers, and town representatives is the grassroots level for citizen involvement

in planning for needed treatment services. Catchment Area Council members advocate for change, recommend funding for mental health services, and provide inspiration to the community from those who have lived experience. SERAC meets monthly with Catchment Area Council members in the Northeast and Southeast to discuss relevant behavioral health issues, learn about what's happening in their communities, and provide legislative updates. SERAC has also provided Question Persuade and Refer and Naloxone training, a presentation on the dangers of vaping, and problem gambling awareness training. This partnership with members and their respective mental health agencies has allowed us to act as liaison between the Catchment Area Council and Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, as well as collect vital information for our Regional Priorities Report.

This past year SERAC worked in collaboration with the Montville Youth Service Bureau and Montville Public Schools as well as UCONN Avery Point. SERAC organized a talk on destigmatizing student athlete mental health at Plainfield High School which was provided by McKenzie Fitzpatrick a member of the UCONN softball team. SERAC worked with the Three Rivers Community College Development office to bring Sarah Gaer, a national speaker, to recognize Suicide Awareness and Prevention Month. SERAC staff have tabled suicide prevention materials at a variety of health fairs and community events including a Mohegan Sun Basketball Game. The state's 1 Word, 1 Voice, 1 Life Campaign materials have been provided to attendees as well as items which reduce their access to lethal means such as Deterra and lock boxes.

# Regional Suicide Advisory Board

SERAC staff coordinate the Region 3 Suicide Advisory Board (RSAB). The goal of the board is to integrate and coordinate suicide prevention, intervention and postvention and grief support and recovery activities across multiple sectors and settings within the 41 towns of the region. The board meets monthly to discuss regional suicide loss data, share updates on state and national initiatives, review best practices for prevention and postvention including local initiatives and facilitate presentations on a variety of topics associated with suicide prevention to increase the knowledge of the membership. The board's membership consists of individuals from diverse back grounds, from direct service to lived experience, working in a variety of settings.

SERAC as the RSAB coordinating agency has provided dedicated trainings to the region on the topics of LGBTQ+ Youth Suicide prevention, Resources for Veterans, GIZMOS' Pawesome Mental Health Guide, Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale (CSSRS), Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) Suicide Prevention, Suicide in the Senior Population, Counseling on Lethal Means (CALM), Postvention and the new 988 national crisis line. These trainings have ben offered in conjunction with RSAB meetings as well as during separate training offerings. Over 300 people have participated in these trainings.

SERAC staff are trained to offer the suicide prevention curriculums of Question Persuade Refer (QPR), Talk Saves Lives, and Vital Cog which can be implemented in a variety of settings. Additionally, staff are trained to provide Naloxone, Postvention and Youth Mental Health First Aid training. SERAC staff received training in Prevent, Reaffirm, Evaluate, Provide, Respond and Examine (PREPARE) and as QPR Pathfinders. SERAC staff have provided classes to general audiences as well as specific groups both virtually as well as in person.

The RSAB coordinator participates in the Connecticut Suicide Advisory Board (CTSAB) as well as the boards' Postvention and Loss Support Work Group, CT 988 Implementation Committee, CT School Safety and Crisis Response Committee,

and the JED Campus Coalition at Three Rivers Community College. The RSAB coordinator meets with the staff from the UNCAS Health District to collaborate on their Center for Disease Control (CDC) grant to work on suicide prevention in their catchment. The five RSAB coordinators collaborated to provide a free statewide suicide prevention training which featured Shelby Rowe, Director of the Suicide Prevention Resource Center.

SERAC with other local partners provided a Safe Messaging of Suicide training for staff from The Day of New London. A school wide QPR training was provided to the students of Harvard H Ellis Technical High School as well as a session for parents. A Screening of the film My Ascension occurred in Montville in collaboration with the Montville Youth Service Bureau and Montville Public Schools as well as UCONN Avery Point. SERAC arranged a talk on destigmatizing student athlete mental health at Plainfield High School which was provided by McKenzie Fitzpatrick a member of the UCONN softball team. SERAC worked with the Three Rivers Community College Development office to bring Sarah Gaer, a national speaker, to recognize Suicide Awareness and Prevention Month. SERAC staff have tabled suicide prevention materials at a variety of health fairs and community events including a Mohegan Sun Basketball Game. The state's 1 Word, 1 Voice, 1 Life Campaign materials have been provided to attendees as well as items which reduce their access to lethal means such as Deterra and lock boxes.

SERAC has provided direct support to several schools and communities following a suicide loss. The support has involved coordination with local provides, sharing resource and best practices and follow up educational offerings. On two occasions, SERAC staff facilitated Posttraumatic Stress Management (PTSM) Groups for individuals impacted by the loss. A postvention guide was developed to assist schools and communities following a loss with the goal of establishing postvention teams across the region.

# Local Prevention Councils

The purpose of the Local Prevention Council Grant Program is to facilitate the development of culturally competent substance use prevention initiatives in the form of local councils and coalitions aimed at citizens across the lifespan. This past year, local prevention councils participated in many activities for vaping/electronic nicotine delivery systems across Eastern CT. This included a review of school policies, education on the new age restrictions, curriculum updates, THC device testing, merchant education, banners for parks and recreations, and compliance checks!

The Regional Prevention/Local Prevention Council (LPC) Grant meetings unite collaborations across SERAC's 41 communities to address underage drinking, cannabis use, prescription drug misuse, and opioid use amongst our residents. During these meetings we assess current regional and local drug trends, plan LPC initiatives and activities, collaborate on training opportunities and advocate for policy changes.

## Partnerships For Success

### Strategic Prevention Framework

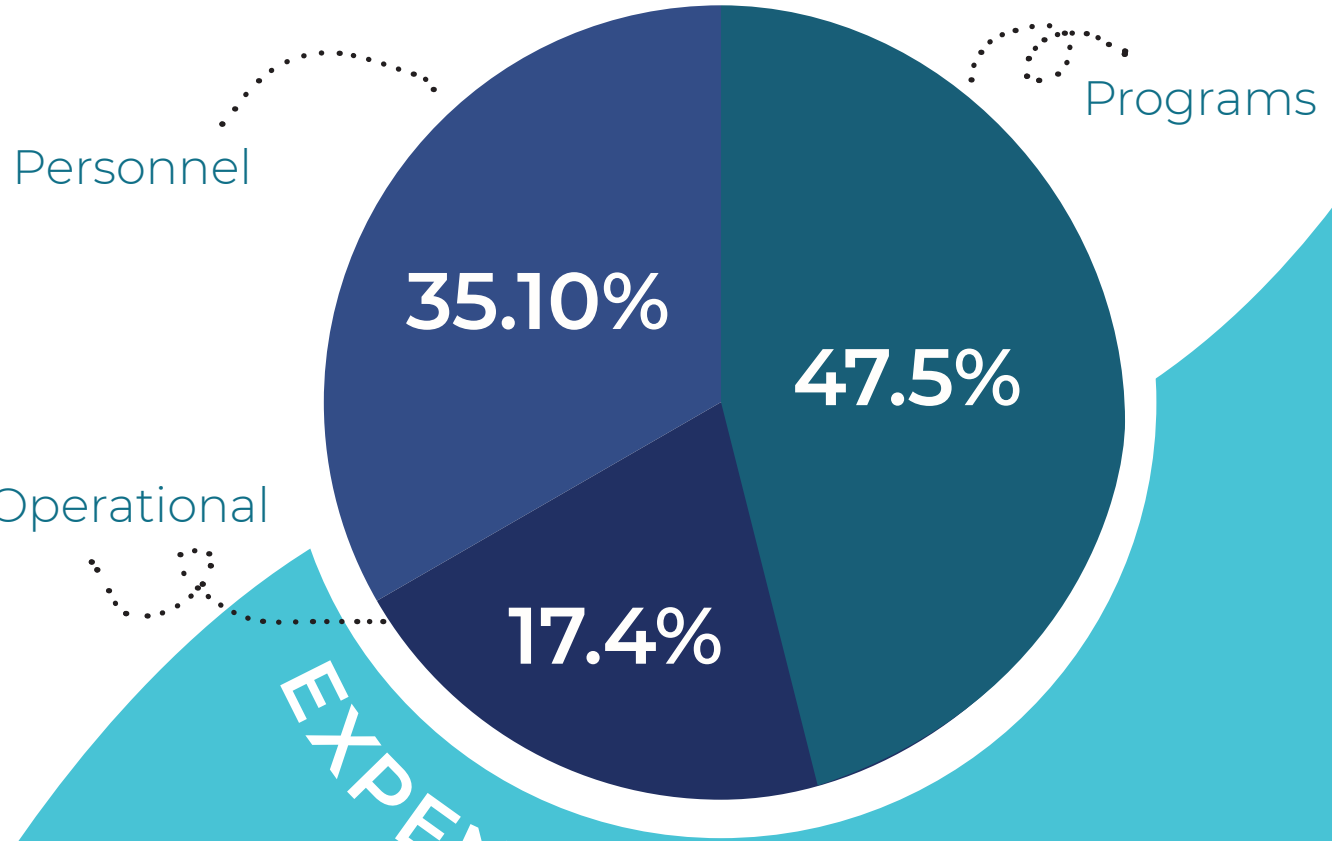
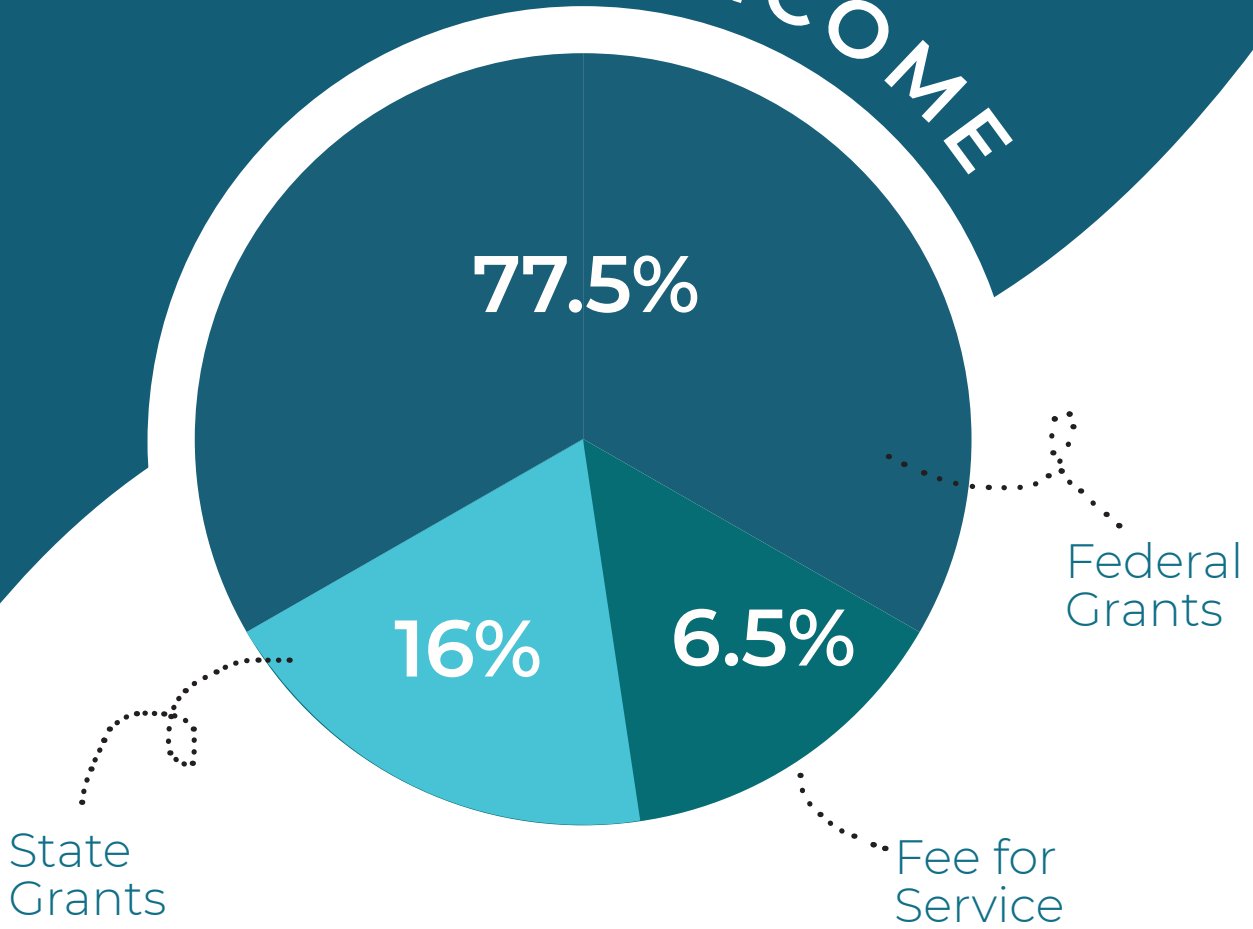
In October 2019, SERAC was awarded a five-year PFS-SPF grant from SAMHSA to increase the capacity of 21 towns in the Quiet Corner of CT to address youth substance abuse. The geographic area under this initiative include the following towns: Ashford, Brooklyn, Canterbury, Chaplin, Columbia, Coventry, Eastford, Hampton, Killingly, Lebanon, Mansfield, Plainfield, Pomfret, Putnam, Scotland, Sterling, Thompson, Union, Willington, Windham, and Woodstock. In the five year period, SERAC hopes to accomplish the following goals:

- Strengthen the regional infrastructure to implement the steps of the Strategic Prevention Framework
- Raise the current readiness score for the region to address youth substance use
- Increase data collection efforts across the 21 towns
- Reduce the rate of binge drinking among youth by 25% in 2024
- Reduce the rate of nicotine use (including electronic delivery systems) by 25% in 2024
- Reduce the rate of marijuana use by 25% in 2024

Under the Strategic Prevention Framework grant we launched the 21 For A Reason campaign. This online resource was created to help spread awareness on public policy and youth substance use. 21 For A Reason provides resources and information regarding the risks associated with alcohol, nicotine/vaping, cannabis, and online gambling and gaming. The website contains helpful facts, warning signs, tips for parents, merchants, and resources for help.

# Fiscal Report

## INCOME



## EXPENSES

# Board & Staff

## Chairperson:

Susan Radway  
Executive Director  
Riverfront Children's Center

## Secretary:

Stacey Lawton  
Chief Executive Officer  
SCADD

## Treasurer:

Kate Alves  
First Vice President  
Credit Department Manager  
Chelsea Groton Bank

## Members:

**David Brailey**  
Mitchell College

**Michele Fontaine**  
CRC-R, LADC  
Retiree from CHR

**Oliver Jones**  
Community Member  
Regional MH Board

**Mark Juhola**  
Retired CT State Police

**Arthur Mongillo**  
Public Information Officer, CT  
DMHAS

**Melinda Smith**  
Superintendent  
Thompson Public Schools

## Interim Executive Director

Angela Rae Duhaime, M.A.

## Regional Prevention Manager

Jennifer Buckley

## Program Coordinator

Deborah Walker

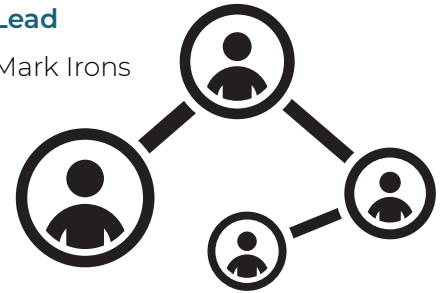
## Finance

Brenda Thibeault

## Suicide Prevention Program

### Lead

Mark Irons



# Funders & Donors



# Community Survey Highlights

In the summer of 2022 SERAC conducted a bi-annual Community Survey on adult perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes on youth substance use. A total of 1093 responses were included in the final analysis, representing 37 of the 41 communities that SERAC serves. A little over half (67%) of the respondents were parents of school-aged children, while the remaining were not parents of school-aged children. Most respondents were female (82%) and between the ages of 36 to 55 (65.2%).

Only 39% of parents reported that using marijuana 1-2 times a week would be a great risk to their oldest child, whereas 57% reported that it would be a great risk for their oldest child to drink alcohol. Similarly, marijuana received the lowest endorsement of any other substance for being very wrong for their

oldest child to use (78%). Non-parent responses followed this trend.

Respondents were asked about their opinions on the legalization of marijuana in Connecticut. More parents than non-parents reported that the legalization would change their perception about marijuana use and increase the rates of marijuana use. More non-parents (55.3%) reported that the legalization of marijuana would lead to more harms (such as impaired driving and dependence) than did parents (52%).

When asked what the most important issue is facing their community today, both parents and non-parents agreed that Mental Health was the most important.

## Towns Surveyed

- Canton
- Killingly
- Griswold
- Lyme-Old Lyme
- Norwich
- Ansonia
- Derby
- Shelton
- East Lyme
- Danielson
- Colchester
- Hamden
- Windham
- Lebanon
- Litchfield



### Contact Us



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**SERAC**