

Addicted and nowhere to turn: County seeks solutions to drug epidemic

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<https://www.10tv.com/article/addicted-and-nowhere-turn-county-seeks-solutions-drug-epidemic>

PUBLISHED: 05/31/18 04:12 PM EDT

UPDATED: 05/31/18 07:28 PM EDT

A group in Newark is bringing the community together to evaluate resources for addicts and find solutions to the drug epidemic.

A town hall scheduled for next Thursday combines law enforcement, addiction treatment providers, mental health professionals and community members.

It is sponsored by the Newark Think Tank on Poverty in partnership with Newark City Schools.

For lifelong Newark resident, Chris Willis, getting clean was only half the battle, as he couldn't find a place to safely detox.

"Our hospitals won't accept certain addictions, our rehabs won't accept certain addictions," Willis says.

Also in Newark, Tonya Cooper found a similar challenge for her daughter Sam.

"She tried it and it was heroin right off the bat and automatically she became addicted and she said it only took that one time mom," Cooper says.

Tonya and Chris are both now working to make it easier for addicts, in a city where they say the drug epidemic, especially meth use, is growing.

"They don't want to talk about meth, it really bothers me because I've seen it in my neighborhood, I see it every day," Cooper explains.

Cooper says for those battling that addiction the bigger challenge is where to turn for help.

According to the Newark Think Tank on Poverty, current treatment resources can only serve 30-40 percent of the need.

"You can't kick them to the street, you can detox them but if they don't have somewhere to go afterward, chances are they'll be back on meth or whatever drugs they were taken," Cooper explains.

"I want to make it easier for the next person," Wills says.

The town hall will be held at Newark High School (314 Granville St., Newark) next Thursday, June 7th at 6:30 p.m.

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