



Westchester  
gov.com

Robert P. Astorino, Westchester County Executive

June 2, 2017

Please join me on June 7<sup>th</sup> at the Westchester County Center in White Plains for the launch of Project WORTHY (**W**estchester **O**pioid **R**esponse **T**eams **H**elping **Y**ou), the latest extension of the county's Safer Communities initiative.

The opioid addiction epidemic grows deadlier every day. Deaths in Westchester jumped to 83 in 2015, an increase of almost 200 percent since 2005. The face of addiction is everywhere, and not where you expect. A young mother coping with depression. A student-athlete hooked on pain killers following a sports-related injury. The tragedy is indiscriminate and the damage extends beyond the addict to family, friends and co-workers.

Through Safer Communities, Westchester has been a leader in saving lives through its programs to train law enforcement and community members on how to administer Narcan, the life-saving drug that can revive opioid overdose victims. But while Narcan literally saves lives – the county's efforts have been credited with 153 reported rescues in the last three years – it is not a solution. Lasting solutions require addressing root causes and offering practical, comprehensive help to addicts and their families. That's where Project WORTHY comes in. It operates from four foundational blocks:

**Education** – Inform the public about the scope, causes, and consequences of opioid addiction.

**Prevention** – Understand the warning signs – the physical and emotional pain points – leading to addiction.

**Integration** – Coordinate resources to produce the most effective response possible.

**Action** – Act sooner, not later, and involve everyone with a stake in the outcome.

Please join me on June 7<sup>th</sup> as we build response teams from community members like you: health care providers, educators, law enforcement professionals, first responders, clergy, business leaders, elected officials and families struggling with opioid addiction.

**Keynote speaker Dennis O. Romero, the regional administrator of the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), will speak on the topic of “The Changing Face of Addiction.”**

Dr. Mark Herceg, our commissioner of Community Mental Health, Dr. Sherlita Amler, our commissioner of Health, and George Longworth, our commissioner of Public Safety, will provide an overview of Project WORTHY. There will also be breakout sessions, where we will turn to you to share your insights and

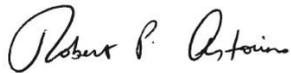
experience on how best to address the opioid crisis confronting us. We will also be looking for volunteers to join our Project WORTHY response teams.

The program in the Little Theatre at the County Center runs from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. The event is open to you and members of your team. **Simply click [here](#) to RSVP by June 5.** The program and parking are free and refreshments will be served.

One of the key takeaways from our previous Safer Communities efforts is that our overall effectiveness is greatly improved when we remove geographical and bureaucratic silos, integrate our resources and knowledge and address common problems together. That's why your participation is so important.

I look forward to seeing you on June 7, and thank you for everything you are already doing to make our communities and county stronger.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert P. Astorino".

Robert P. Astorino  
Westchester County Executive