Monroe County Call-to-Action Campaign

Deconstructing Stigma, Restoring Community, and Humanizing Substance Use Disorder

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Monroe County Department of Public Health
Addiction Services Division

Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Monroe County, New York



- 657 square miles
- 750,506 residents
  - 206,108 in city of Rochester, NY
  - 3rd largest city in NY State
- Mix of urban, suburban, and rural towns

Race

- White 76%
- Black 16.5%
- Asian 3.9%
- Hispanic or Latino 10.1%

2025 US Census
2025 Monroe County Medical Examiner

Monroe County Addiction Services IMPACT Team
Monroe County Department of Public Health



- Post-overdose Response Team
- Street Outreach
- Naloxbox Program
- Overdose and SUD education
- 24/7 Hotline Support
- Community Partnership
  - CACTUS Anti-Stigma coalition
  - First responder Leave Behind Program
  - Safe Drug Disposal Pharmacy Partnership
  - And more!



Why Mass Media Campaigns?

- NYS Opioid Settlement Fund Advisory Board (OSFAB) recommendations prioritize
  - bystander education
  - risk-reduction education (reduce isolation, test substances)
  - naloxone education
  - drug trend education
  - addressing disparities and gaps in treatment engagement

- Shift in community perception (stigma reduction) is crucial
  - Early responses to community outreach
  - Rochester RASE Report identified stigma as a key issue preventing people from seeking and accessing needed care for addiction. (RASE, 2021)
  - In local survey, highest ranked barrier to care was “Negative stigma associated with opioid addiction” (City of Rochester, 2025)

- SAMHSA identifies Media Campaigns as a key evidence-based strategy for reducing stigma

- Introduction to campaigns through 2023 NIH HEALing Communities Study

NYS OSFAB Annual Report 2026
SAMHSA Anti-Stigma Toolkit: A guide to reducing behavioral health disorder stigma. 2023

Why Call-to-Action Campaigns?

Awareness campaigns use Information Deficit Model

- Well-intentioned, but critically ignores cognitive and social factors
- Risks are inaction, creating harm, reaching wrong audience, creating backlash

"Actionable and achievable **Calls-To-Action** lead specific groups of people to do something they haven't done before" – Ann Christiano & Annie Neimand

1. Target audience as narrowly as possible
2. Create compelling messages with clear call-to-action
   - Craft messaging and stories that do not threaten how an audience sees itself and its values
   - Empowers target audience to take action (ex. Just Say No campaign)
3. Use spokespersons that have authority or credibility in the target audience.
   - Who is trustworthy and influential to the target group?
   - Spokesperson is connected to how people see themselves, their values, and identities
4. Effective and strategic communication

Stanford Review, Essentials of Social Innovation. *Stop Raising Awareness Already*. 2017

Campaign Goals and Messaging

Quarterly campaigns aimed to translate goals into clear and relevant call-to-action messages

- Restore community connection → *"I saved a life by calling 911", "Stop the Stigma, Start the Conversation".*
- Awareness and education → *"Recovery is Any. Positive. Change."*
- Deconstructing stigma → *"Change the Words, Change the Outcomes".*
- Creating an action-ready community → *"Help save lives, carry naloxone and learn how to use it."*
- Increasing access to harm reduction and resources → *"If you choose to use, play it safe. Test your drugs, carry naloxone, and never use alone."*





Campaign Development Process

- **Planning Stage**
  - Strategic objective-setting, target audience identification, and location mapping
- **Content Development**
  - Creating tailored multi-platform messaging, develop campaign material, and select spokespersons, influencers, and individuals with lived experience for spokesperson video content.
- **Campaign Launch**
  - Align launch dates across all social media, CCTV, audio streaming, news, radio, web and out-of-home placements for a synchronized campaign rollout.
- **Data and Metrics Post Campaign**
  - Tracks multi-channel engagement metrics, including impressions, views, clicks, and website visits, while evaluating campaign impact on hotline call volume.

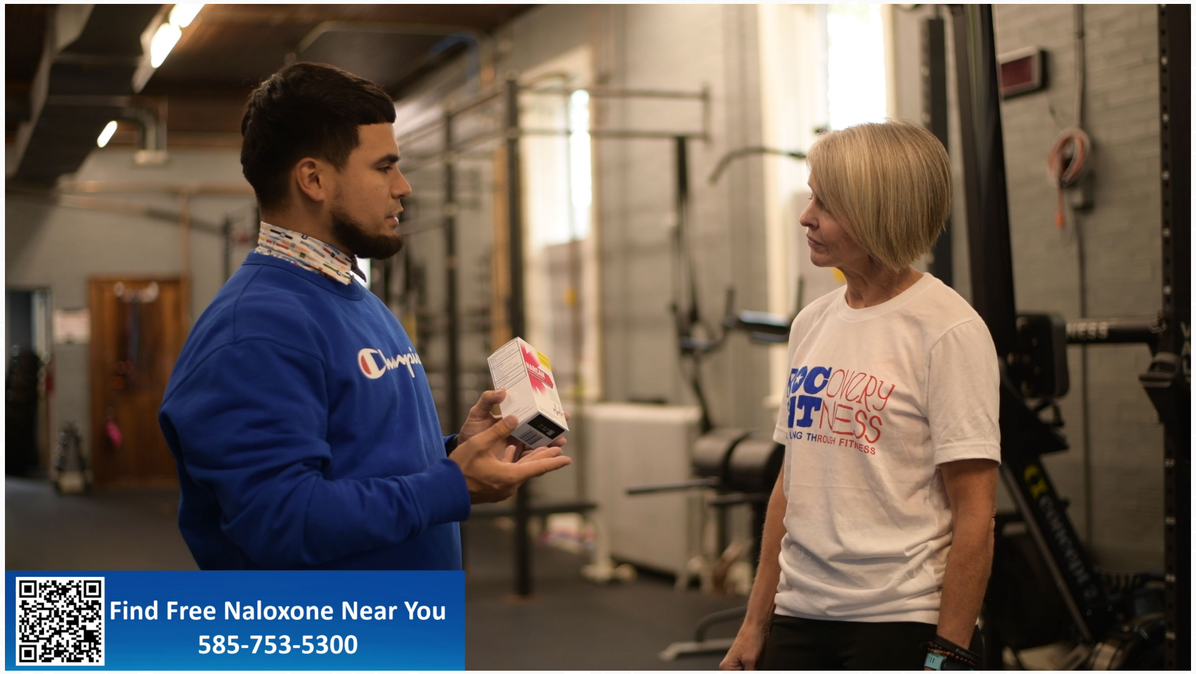
Communication Channels

- **Social Media & Streaming Platforms**
  Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, video & audio streaming services (i.e. Spotify)
- **Online Information Outlets**
  Local online periodicals (newspaper, magazines, local news pages)
- **Community Partners**
  Campaign materials shared with partners who post campaign materials to newsletters, website, social media, and email
- **CCTV**
  Local County and college CCTV
- **Out of Home placements**
  Billboards, bus ads, and bus shelter ads throughout Monroe County.
- **Television placements**
  NBC, CBS, ABC placements
- **Radio Outlets**
  103.9 WDKX, 105.5 The Beat,
  97.1 Poder, 97.5 La Mega

Campaign Phase 1: Naloxone Availability

Objectives

- Increase awareness of Naloxboxes and free naloxone in the community
- Educate on how to use naloxone (Peel, Place, Push)
- Motivate community to become action-ready and support those with SUD
- Reduce community stigma associated with SUD
- Drive engagement with interactive Naloxbox Map and the county 24/7 Crisis Hotline.







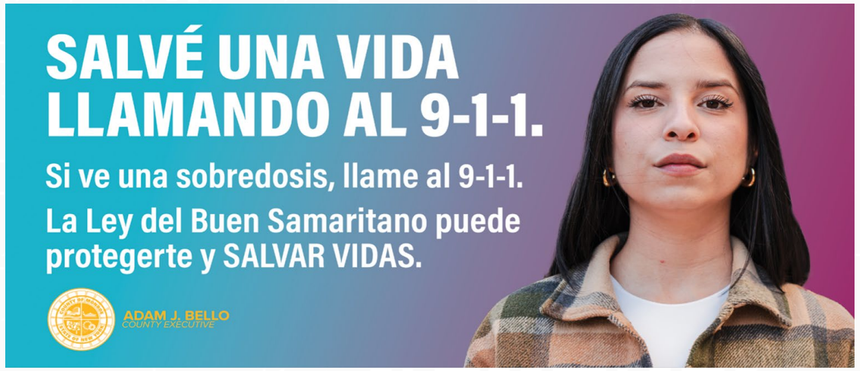
Source: Monroe County Department of Public Health Addiction Services. Game Plan Marketing.

Campaign Phase 2: NYS Good Samaritan Law

Objectives

- Educate on NYS 911 Good Samaritan Law
- Eliminate misinformation surrounding drug use, harm reduction, and legal protection
- Prevent potentially fatal overdoses and unattended death through timely intervention
- Motivate residents to be action ready to support People Who Use Drugs (PWUD) during emergencies.





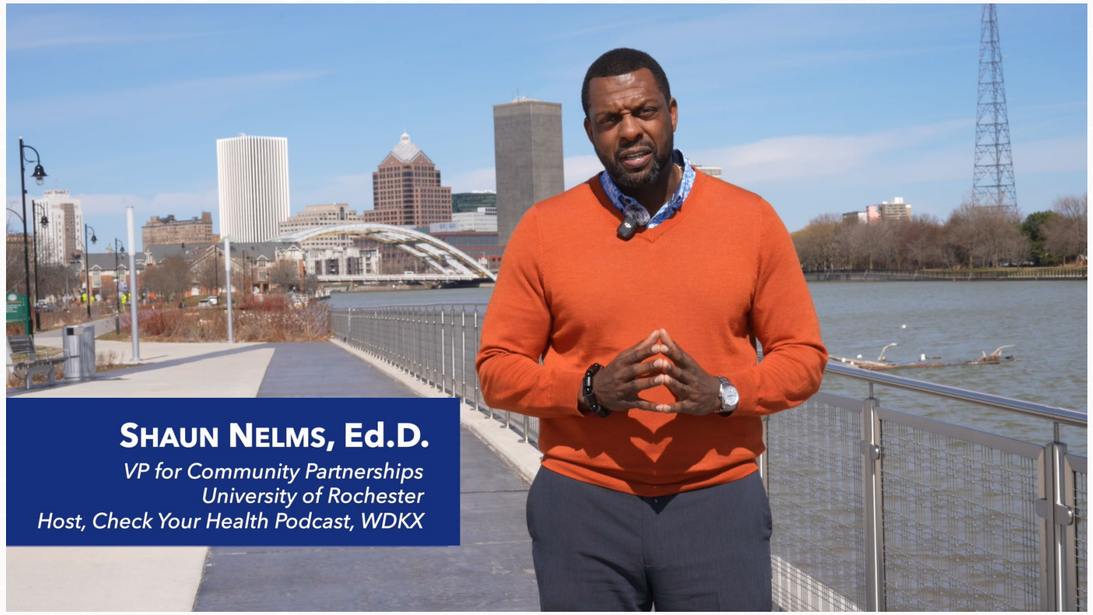


Source: Monroe County Department of Public Health Addiction Services. Game Plan Marketing.

Campaign Phase 3: Polysubstance Use Awareness

Objectives

- Raise awareness of the tainted drug supply, specifically cocaine
- Engage disproportionately affected groups, specifically older African American man
- Promote harm reduction and raise awareness of availability of test strips and naloxone
- Empower community members through awareness, education and preparedness
- Increase traffic to addiction services website and crisis hotline







Source: Monroe County Department of Public Health Addiction Services. Game Plan Marketing.

Campaign Phase 4: Community Mobilization, Anti-Stigma

Objectives

- Target disproportionately affected groups, specifically African American community
- Raise awareness on the dangers of fentanyl and the importance of carrying naloxone
- Eliminate stigma surrounding substance use and begin the conversation about use and treatment options
- Support those experiencing substance use disorders
- Empower community members through awareness, education and preparedness
- Increase traffic to Addiction Services website and crisis hotline for additional resources and for treatment options



Source: Monroe County Department of Public Health Addiction Services. Game Plan Marketing.







Campaign Phase 5: Faces of Substance Use Disorder

Objectives

- Empower individuals through personal storytelling, bringing lived experiences to life to drive behavior change through emotional connection.
- Eliminate the stigma surrounding to foster empathy and community acceptance.
- Encourage treatment and spark hope by emphasizing that recovery is possible.
- Inform community treatment varies and is different for each individual.
- Influence long-term behavioral change within the community to support individuals seeking help.



Source: Monroe County Department of Public Health Addiction Services. Game Plan Marketing.







Campaign Phase 6: Person-First Language

Objectives

- Foster respectful communication through Person-First language
- Eliminate the stigma surrounding SUD to cultivate community acceptance and empathy.
- Reduce barriers to treatment by building a supportive community environment.
- Shift public perception away from viewing addiction as a moral failure or personal choice and toward recognizing it as a treatable, chronic brain condition.
- Lower internal and external barriers for individuals experiencing substance use to ask for help long before a life-threatening crisis occurs.



Source: Monroe County Department of Public Health Addiction Services. Game Plan Marketing.





Campaign Data and Impact

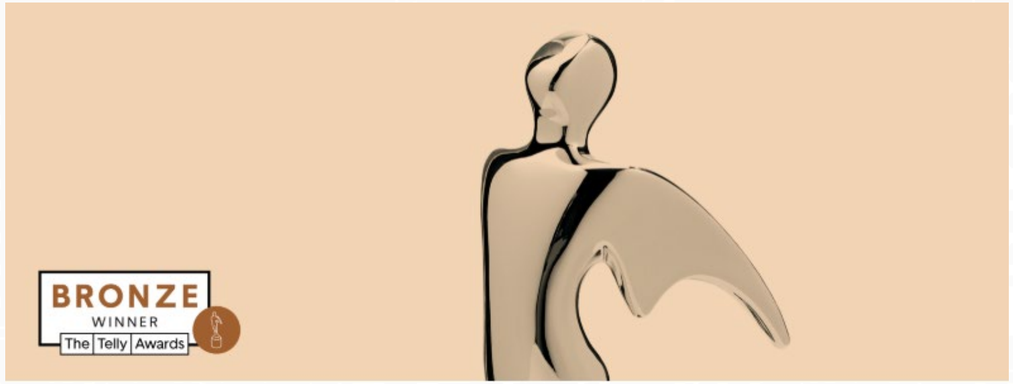
Campaign Phase 1 thru Phase 6 Metrics
Total Impressions*: 4,713,899
Total Clicks**: 31,983

*Impressions represent the number of times an ad is viewed
**Clicks measure engagement by a user

44th Annual Telly Awards

Bronze Winner

- **Public Service PSA in Local TV, Streaming and Digital**



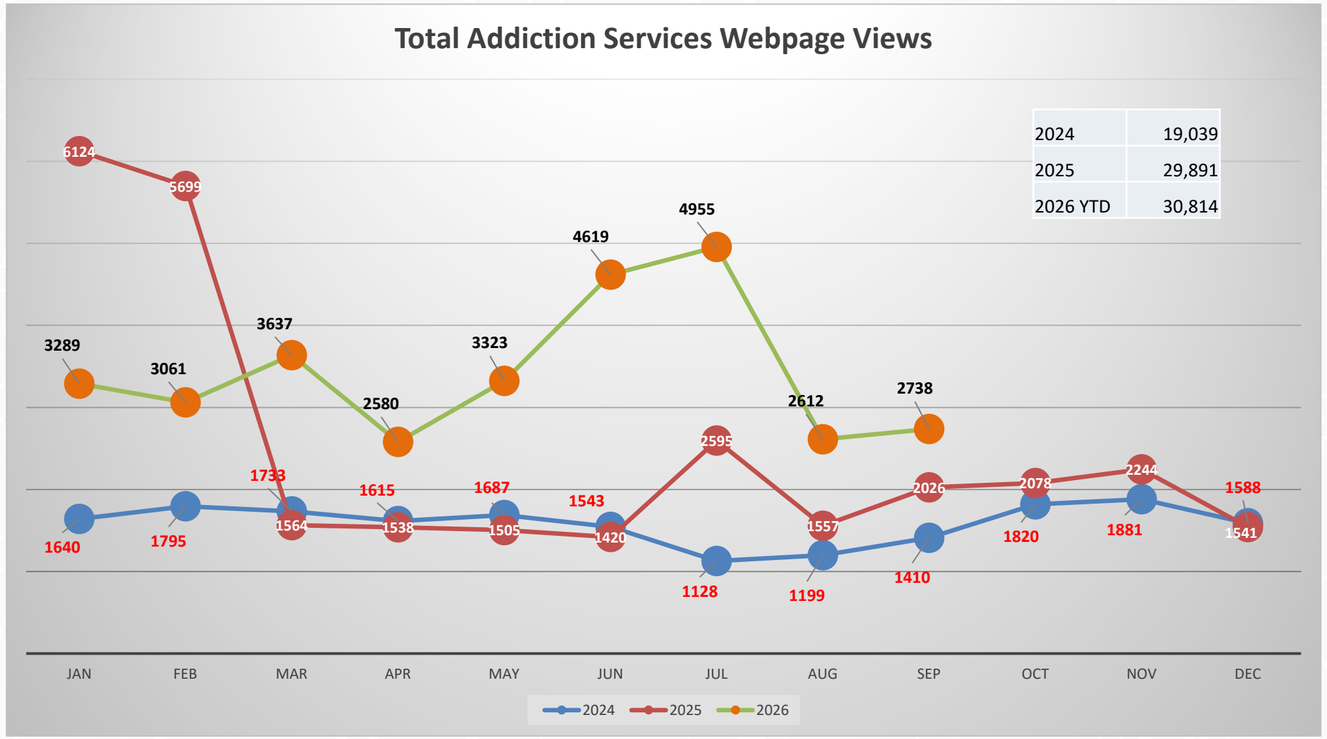
Campaign Impact

24/7 IMPACT Support Hotline

- 1/3 of our hotline communications are generated due to media sources
- 31% increase in hotline communications in the past year
- 133% increase in hotline calls related to support for self or loved one

Addiction Services Webpages

- 62% increase in webpage visits since 2024



Campaign Impact – Stories*

Mike reached out to the IMPACT hotline after viewing Waymon's story on the news. Mike connected with the message- he had struggled with substance use since his daughter was 1 year old- she is now 30. He has tried therapy and group counseling, but feels ready to enter treatment and try to reconnect with his family. Our staff guided Mike through various community resources and treatment options. Our team picked up Mike the next morning and transported him to Open Access where he was assessed and admitted to treatment.

Don reached out to the IMPACT hotline stating that he just saw a commercial ad about the dangers of substances and wanted to know how he could get some Narcan. Don shared that his son is in active SUD, had recently overdosed, is losing his housing, and asking to live with Don. Staff allowed Don to share openly, empathized with the difficulties of support a loved one with SUD, and arranged to deliver Narcan, testing strips, and resources to his home the next day. Staff also shared numerous family support resources with Don.

Jackie reached out to the IMPACT hotline after seeing our TV commercial and was interested in getting some drug test strips. She reported having recent bloodwork results show fentanyl in her system, which surprised her because she does not use fentanyl knowingly, but uses other illicit drugs. IMPACT Staff was able to deliver Jackie safe use resources and drug testing strips the same day.

Kevin reached out to the IMPACT hotline, stating that he saw our TV commercial and wanted help. Kevin had been drinking every day since 1988 and is ready now because he is tired. Staff discussed treatment options and transportation for treatment evaluation. Staff followed up with Kevin the next day and ensured he made it to Open Access for his evaluation and subsequent treatment. Kevin cried and stated appreciation for the IMPACT Team's love and support.

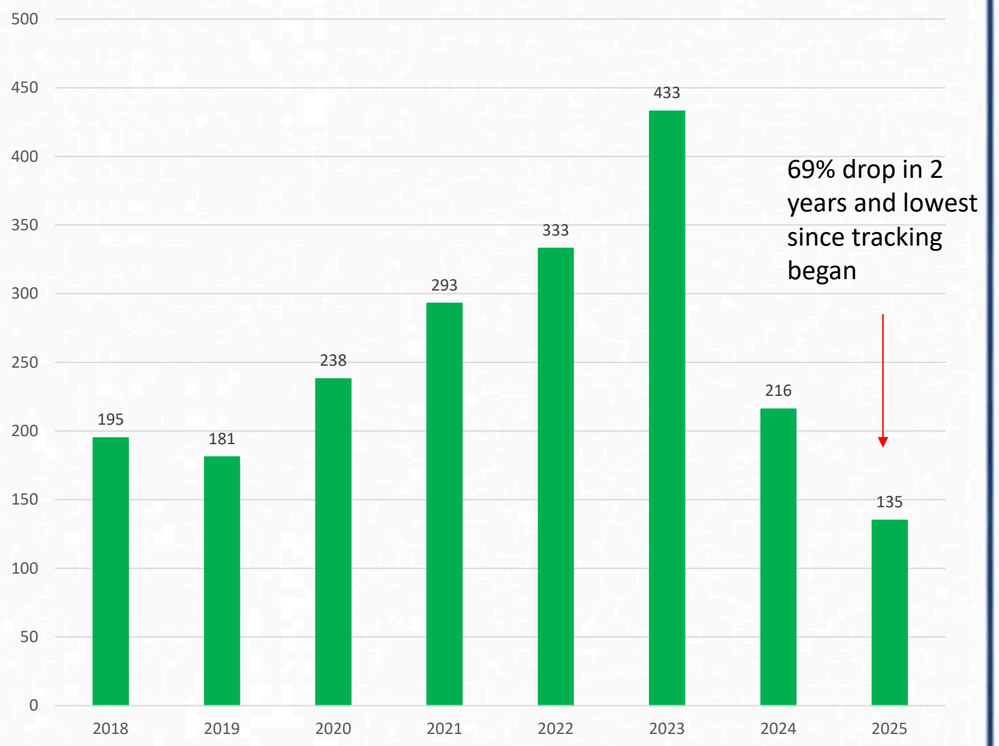
*Names changed for privacy

Overdose Death in Monroe County

Racial disparity of overdose death has reduced over the past two years

Race	Percent of Overdose Deaths 2023	Percent of Overdose Deaths 2024	Percent of Overdose Deaths 2025	Monroe Co. General Population Estimate 2025
White or Caucasian	59.0%	67.5%	73.3%	72.9%
Black or African American	39.6%	31.2%	26.7%	17.1%
Asian	1.0%	1.4%	0.0%	4.7%
Other	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	5.3%
Hispanic	10.4%	14.0%	9.9%	10.7%

of Opioid-related Overdose Deaths



Source: Monroe County Office of the Medical Examiner

Future Campaign Outlook

- Continue to educate the community on SUD and recent substance use trends
- Continue to deconstruct the stigma associated with substance use
- Engage local influencers and individuals with lived experience to deliver relatable, authentic content
  - Incorporate social media influencers
  - Incorporate family support
- Motivate individuals with SUD to seek treatment through removing barriers and humanizing substance use
- Expand communication channels to effectively reach diverse and underserved populations
- Expand social media presence of county health department
- Enhance efficacy and functionality of Addiction Services webpages and county app

Acknowledgements

- Game Plan Marketing, Rochester, NY
- Monroe County Executive Adam Bello
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- Dr. Tisha Smith, Director of Addiction Services, MCDPH

Questions?



Thank you!

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24 Hour IMPACT Opioid Crisis Hotline: 585-753-5300

https://www.monroecounty.gov/addiction