

FRIENDS NEWS



Friends of New Hampshire Drug Courts

Drug Courts Work – They Transform Lives

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FNHDC Meetings

The Friends meet on the third Wednesday of each month at 1:00 PM. Meeting location varies.

Our June meeting will be held June 20, 2018 at 1:00 PM New Futures in Concord, NH.

The Friends Celebrate Two Years at Annual Meeting on May 10, 2018



The Friends of New Hampshire Drug Courts celebrated their second year of statewide success on May 10, 2018 at the Common Man restaurant in Concord, NH. The event is held in May each year to honor National Drug Court Month.

Attendees included Friends officers and members of the board of directors, coordinators of the drug courts from throughout the state, representatives from the offices of Congresswoman Annie Kuster and Senator Maggie Hassan, Executive Councilor Joe

Kenney, and the Honorable Chief Justice of the NH Superior Court Tina Nadeau.

The program included the election of officers for the 2018 year, adoption of the proposed 2018 budget, and a celebration of the success of the expanding drug court programs in New Hampshire. The featured speaker was Dr. Thomas Andrew, former NH chief medical examiner.

The Friends Board of Directors also took the opportunity to honor outgoing officers Donald Perlee and Bill Howell. In his time as board secretary, Don

set the precedent that the Friends would be an organization that communicated priorities broadly to members and allies, and his commitment ensured the achievement of Friends goals. During his time on the board, Bill Howell contributed thoughtful attention to board finances and worked to draw in more champions of the cause of NH drug courts. Both Don and Bill were instrumental in the rewriting of the board by-laws. Ed Rajsteter, President of the Board of Directors, honored both outgoing members with some words at the annual meeting.

Dr. Thomas Andrew echoes Friends' message: 'Drug courts work. They transform lives.'

By Kathy Marchockki

The statistics were familiar to nearly everyone from the legal, law enforcement, mental health and addiction treatment community in the room. Annual drug-related deaths in New Hampshire skyrocketed from less than 200 at the start of the decade to nearly 500 since. Synthetic fentanyl is now behind nearly all of them. And 90 percent of addictions start in the teen years.

That was the grim timeline Dr. Thomas Andrew saw during the 20 years he served as the state's chief medical examiner until his retirement last fall. Despite repeated efforts to bring public attention and action to bear on what would become the state's top public health crisis, Granite Staters were slow to respond.

the course of 20 years – breast cancer, asthma, domestic violence – there would be pitch forks, torches, people would be clamoring for action," Andrew told an estimated 50 people in his keynote remarks at the 2018 annual meeting of the Friends of the New Hampshire Drug Courts.

But there is hope.

"The good news is we've finally admitted that we've got a problem and we've stopped the charade of saying, 'It's those people.' It's not 'those people.' It's 'us people.' The silos are down and we are starting to talk to one another," Andrew said of the cooperation that now exists among law enforcement, education, health care, mental health and the judiciary.

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-Dr. Thomas Andrew, former NH Chief Medical Examiner

Better yet, the community is getting involved. He pointed to programs like the Friends of the NH Drug Courts and the grant program it administers for pregnant women and young mothers who participate in drug courts.

"I've heard it said somewhere that drug courts work. That they transform lives. That is a slogan that has the marvelous advantage of being true. It will take time. It didn't happen overnight and it won't end overnight...But I know you will stay the course," Andrew said.

Founder of White Mountain Forensic Consulting Services in Concord, Andrew now directs his energies at prevention by working in youth ministry with the Boy Scouts of America Daniel Webster Council and the Appalachian Trail Chaplaincy, a ministry of the United Methodist Church. Andrew is currently in seminary with the United Methodist Church.

