**FARMINGVILLE, NY** - Brookhaven Supervisor Mark Lesko, Deputy Supervisor Kathleen Walsh and Suffolk County District Attorney Tom Spota have announced that the Town will host a "HOPE Summit" for residents and families battling addiction and substance abuse. The summit, which is free, will be held on Tuesday, September 22 from 6:30 - 9:30 p.m. in the Brookhaven Town Hall Auditorium, One Independence Hill, Farmingville.

"The HOPE Summit aims to provide parents and caregivers with a better understanding of how drug use is invading our neighborhoods in unexpected ways, and how it is endangering our most vulnerable age groups," said Supervisor Lesko. "By hosting this event, we're helping to combat the new drug epidemic in our schools and communities, and offer hope for the families personally waging this battle at home."

The HOPE Summit will address the impact of addiction on families; the role of families in preventing and addressing abuse/addiction; offer concrete and productive strategies for intervening; and provide community resources for family support, interventions, etc.

"This event will provide residents and families attending with all the local tools and resources available for drug users and their family, provide realistic and powerful testimony from a panel of Long Island's foremost experts in the field, and allow members of the audience to meet one on one with these experts," said Councilwoman Walsh.

Statistics on drug use on Long Island - especially heroin use - are alarming. Use of heroin among teens is skyrocketing, while the price of the drug has dropped, increased in purity and has become fairly easy to obtain in communities across Nassau and Suffolk. A "bundle" of heroin priced at $150 in 2006 now costs just $80, and smaller quantities can be bought for as little as $7. Suffolk and Nassau Police are reporting an increase in the number of heroin-related arrests, and the U.S. Department of Justice has ranked heroin alongside cocaine as the most serious drug threats to New York. Gateway drugs to heroin, such as Oxycotin, Percocet, Vicodin, Codeine and Darvon, are also on the rise.

The Keynote speaker for the evening is John Venza, LCSW-R, LMCH, Vice President of Adolescent Services of Outreach Project, Inc. Outreach is an organization committed to making a difference in the lives of individuals and families affected by substance abuse. Since its inception, the services Outreach offers have been designed to meet the needs of specialized populations and communities that have been traditionally under-served. Today, they are recognized as a premier provider and champion of substance abuse services for adolescents, women, women with children, and diverse populations.

Among the panelists participating in the HOPE Summit are Jeffrey Reynolds, PhD, of the Long Island Council on Alcoholism & Drug Dependence (LICADD). LICADD's mission is to address the addictive climate of our times by providing initial attention and referral services to individuals, families, and children, through intervention, education and professional guidance to overcome the ravages of alcohol and other drug-related problems. Throughout its history LICADD has been acclaimed as a leading source of prevention through education and early intervention strategies to solve addiction and family related problems.

Other panelists participating in the summit include Thomas MacGilvray, of Suffolk County Department of Mental Hygiene Services; Father Frank Pizzarelli of Hope House Ministries; Dr. Joseph Rella, Superintendent of Comsewogue Schools; and Det. Lt. James Hickey of the Suffolk County Police Department Criminal Intelligence Division.

For more information regarding the HOPE Summit please visit [www.Brookhaven.org/HopeSummit](http://www.Brookhaven.org/HopeSummit) or call (631) 451-TOWN.

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