

# Volunteer coalition pushes back against opioid epidemic

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*Herald-Standard*

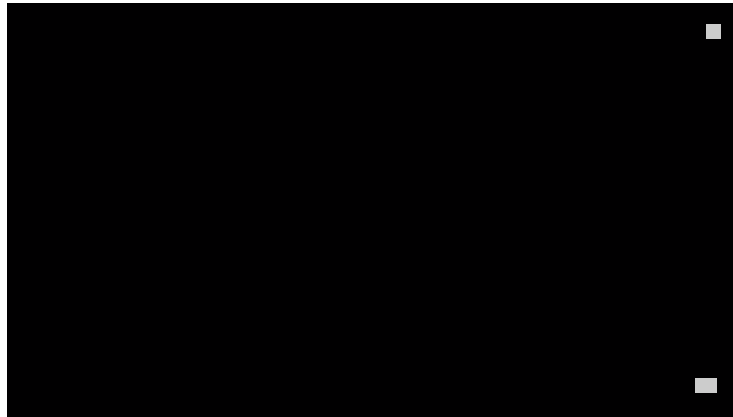
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WAYNESBURG, PA. — More than 2½ years ago, several hundred residents, law enforcement officers and other representatives packed the Greene County Courthouse for a standing-room-only town hall focused on saving the rural county from its worsening epidemic of drug and alcohol addiction.

"It was the first time I saw the county stand up and say, 'We have to do something,'" Greene County resident Jonathan Johnson said.

But while the meeting acknowledged the problem, some left frustrated at what they felt was a lack of planning offered to address it.

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The all-volunteer organization has been working ever since to help alleviate drug abuse in the county.

It sponsored a March for Greene, which on a rainy day in May 2016 attracted approximately 1,400 marchers through Waynesburg, some who displayed signs indicating they'd lost loved ones to drugs.

It installed a substance-abuse prevention program called Botvin LifeSkills Training at all five school districts in the county for grades 3 through 9.

It is working with Steps Inside, a Waynesburg-based recovery club, to set up a hotline for those in need of addiction help.

And it's also targeting societal side effects of addiction.

The coalition is in the process of establishing an independent Court Appointed Special Advocate program to train and recruit volunteers to help Greene County courts make informed decisions on abused and abandoned children who come before the courts for service and placement.