



RESEARCH SOLUTIONS

Region 4 Prevention Newsletter – September 2025 Edition: “Promoting Wellness, Reducing Stigma, Celebrating Recovery”

📍 *Serving Clay, Craighead, Greene, Lawrence, Mississippi, Poinsett & Randolph Counties*

🧡 **September is National Recovery Month: This year’s theme: "Recovery is for Everyone: Every Person, Every Family, Every Community."**

Each September, we observe National Recovery Month to recognize the strength and resilience of those on their recovery journey and to celebrate the professionals, programs, and communities supporting them. Recent data from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) indicates that over 20 million Americans are living in recovery. In Arkansas, approximately 144,000 adults live with substance use disorder, and access to peer recovery support has significantly expanded through state initiatives and local coalitions. Early Intervention programs and Recovery-informed programs include education on mental health, coping skills, and resilience—tools that help young people avoid risky behaviors before they start. In short, supporting recovery is prevention. It creates healthier environments, empowers individuals to lead by example, and gives young people the tools and support they need to make positive choices.

Why Supporting Recovery Matters Overall

Recovery support helps individuals rebuild their lives, reducing the likelihood of relapsing and breaking generational cycles of substance misuse. Recovery allows individuals to reconnect with loved ones, contribute to their communities, and serve as role models for others. When people are supported in recovery, communities see fewer overdoses, less crime, and reduced healthcare costs. Why It’s Crucial in Youth Prevention? Youth who see people in recovery thriving are more likely to understand the risks of substance use and the value of healthy choices. Supporting recovery strengthens community networks, school engagement, and peer support—all of which are proven to reduce the likelihood of youth substance use, building protective factors. Recovery-centered initiatives often lead to broader conversations about prevention, mental health, and support systems for youth.

Local Upcoming Recovery Events in Northeast Arkansas to Highlight

NEA Divine Intervention is a peer-led recovery community center dedicated to supporting individuals in Northeast Arkansas who are navigating substance use, mental health challenges, and related life transitions. Founded by Shalinda Woolbright, a long-time advocate and person in recovery, the center offers a compassionate, non-judgmental space where people are met exactly where they are in their journey. NEA Divine Intervention Inc. – Peer Community Center and its core services offered: Peer Support & Mentorship; Staffed entirely by individuals with lived experience, the center provides one-on-one and group peer support to help others build resilience and maintain long-term recovery. Support Groups & Check-ins, Training for Future Peer Specialists with opportunities for individuals in recovery (2+ years sober) to train and become certified peer support specialists. NEA Divine Intervention is more than a service provider; it is a community of hope, built on shared experience, compassion, and the belief that recovery is possible for everyone. 📍 *NEW Location: 2222 Spence Circle, Jonesboro, AR; Website: neadivineintervention.org*

Promote harm reduction tools like the Revive AR App and Naloxone access, also available free of charge at the NEA CommUNITY Resource Center and NEA Divine.

Join NEA Divine Intervention and the Region 4 prevention network in celebrating and supporting recovery throughout September:

Recovery in the Streets: September 6, 2025 @ 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM Urban Park Pavilion, Downtown Jonesboro (Next to Abilities Unlimited) Enjoy speakers, music, local vendors, food, free resources, and a community celebration of healing. <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/recovery-in-the-streets>

Together We Can Stop the Stigma Conference: September 15, 2025 @ 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM Hilton Garden Inn, Jonesboro. This impactful all-day event will highlight real stories of recovery, community partnerships, and education about substance use, mental health, and stigma reduction. Register early! <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/2025-together-we-can-stop-the-stigma>

Region 4 Prevention Highlight: Stay Connected

Research Solutions Inc. recently hosted 818 – Realign. Rise. Rebuild, a one-day regional leadership summit focused on youth drug prevention in Region 4. The event brought together voices from across the community, educators, corrections professionals, DFC representatives, business leaders, and the public interest, with 6 of our 7 counties represented.

The summit was designed to spark purpose-driven action and strengthen adult leadership in prevention efforts. Throughout the day, speakers and attendees highlighted the power of early prevention education and shared why it matters. They discussed proven strategies that reduce risk factors like peer pressure and lack of support, while building protective factors such as school connectedness and positive peer relationships.

The key takeaway? Prevention works best when it starts early. Research shows that when young people are taught healthy decision-making, resilience, and communication skills early on, they're more likely to avoid risky behaviors like substance use.

Tools like the Arkansas Prevention Needs Assessment (APNA) survey are essential in this work. APNA provides real, community-based data that helps schools and organizations understand what students are facing. It's more than just a survey; it's a roadmap for creating targeted, effective support systems that help youth thrive.

For a first-time event, the summit was a success. Thank you to everyone who helped make it happen and to all who showed up ready to learn, share, and lead.

Looking for another powerful way to support mental health and reduce the stigma around substance use? The Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) program, offered by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing, is a great place to start. MHFA trains individuals to recognize the signs of mental health or substance use challenges and connect people to the care they need. Participants learn how to:

Assess situations and respond to someone in crisis. Identify signs and symptoms of mental health and substance use disorders. Listen without judgment and encourage professional support.

 Want to get certified in MHFA? Reach out to our Region 4 team to join an upcoming training session. Certification is available for adults, youth-serving professionals, and community leaders.

Farewell & Best Wishes: Mr. Roy “Chip” Carroll. It's with heartfelt appreciation that we say goodbye to our Prevention Coordinator, Mr. Roy “Chip” Carroll, as he transitions to a new role at Methodist Children's Behavioral Hospital in Jonesboro.

About Chip Carroll: Chip is an educator, historian, and mental health professional-in-training. He holds a B.A. and M.A. in History from Arkansas State University and has served as adjunct faculty across multiple colleges. In addition to his academic work, Chip is active in behavioral health, community programs, and the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA), where he competes in full-contact medieval tournaments!

During his time with Research Solutions Inc., Chip brought energy, scholarship, and compassion to his work in prevention and mental wellness. His presence will be greatly missed by colleagues and partners across Region 4. Congratulations, Chip—and thank you for all you’ve done!

Need prevention materials? Interested in bringing training and programs to your school, coalition, or organization? We are your Regional Prevention Provider | Research Solutions Inc. "Building safer, stronger communities through education and prevention."

Stay Connected for more information or to get involved: Check out all of our newsletters, feel free to share with others, and stay updated on future events and prevention resources.

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<https://www.instagram.com/preventandsavelives/>

for updates, resources, and upcoming events.

Sources:

National Recovery Month Theme <https://www.samhsa.gov/about/digital-toolkits/recovery-month/toolkit> The 2025 theme for National Recovery Month is “Recovery is REAL: Restoring Every Aspect of Life”, emphasizing health, home, community, and purpose 1.

Americans Living in Recovery <https://www.samhsa.gov/substance-use/recovery> SAMHSA reports that approximately 50.2 million American adults consider themselves to be in recovery from substance use and/or mental health problems 2.

Arkansas Substance Use Disorder Statistics https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/reports/rpt56188/2023-nsduh-sae-state-tables_0/2023-nsduh-sae-state-tabs-arkansas.pdf According to the 2022–2023 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, approximately 450,000 Arkansans aged 12 and older met the criteria for a substance use disorder in the past year 3.

Youth Recovery Support Benefits <https://www.samhsa.gov/technical-assistance/brss-tacs/youth> SAMHSA’s BRSS TACS initiative supports youth-led recovery programs, emphasizing peer support, leadership development, and community engagement as key protective factors against substance use 4