

Reliant Foundation, QCC hosts addiction expert

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Reliant Foundation partners with Quinsigamond Community College to host nationally-recognized addiction expert, Dr. Ruth Potee, for presentation on ‘Physiology of Addiction’

WORCESTER - To align with September being National Recovery Month, Worcester-based non-profit Reliant Foundation teamed up with Quinsigamond Community College to host leading addiction expert, Dr. Ruth Potee, Monday, Sept. 16, for a public presentation entitled, ‘Physiology of Addiction.’ More than 300 people attended the free event at QCC’s Hebert Auditorium.

“Substance abuse – in particular the opioid epidemic – continues to make headlines across the country, and directly impacts our local communities,” said Reliant Foundation President Kelsa Zereski. “Our hope is that attendees of this presentation will walk away with an even deeper understanding of this public health crisis, and also some context around how and why an individual becomes addicted to any substance.”

In addition to the 300-plus attendees, the event drew the support of several notable community and elected officials, including Worcester County District Attorney Joseph Early Jr., Worcester County Sheriff Lewis Evangelidis, and Massachusetts state Rep. James O’Day.

“Just about every day we hear new staggering statistics about the impact substance abuse has on our communities,” said Dr. Potee. “We’re all working really hard to combat this epidemic, but we – as a collective – must first start with an understanding of how we’ve gotten to this point...how someone becomes addicted, why it’s so difficult to break an addiction, and why so many addicts struggle with maintaining sobriety.”

“We are proud to have been able to partner with our friends at Reliant Foundation to host Dr. Potee’s presentation on our campus. Addiction and its effects on the community impact our lives in so many ways. It is vitally important to have these types of conversations, and to break down the stigmas of substance abuse/mental illness. Increasing awareness of this national crisis is key to finding a solution,” said QCC President Dr. Luis G. Pedraja.

Dr. Potee's presentation is available on the QCC website at www.qcc.edu/media/dr-ruth-potee-speaks.

Dr. Potee, a board-certified family physician and addiction medicine physician, is the medical director for the Franklin County House of Corrections, the director of addiction services for Behavioral Health Network, and the medical director for the Pioneer Valley Regional School District. Co-chair of the Healthcare Solutions Committee of the Opioid Task Force of Franklin County and the North Quabbin Regions, Dr. Potee was named 2015 Franklin County Doctor of the Year by the Massachusetts Medical Society.

Established in 1988 as a public charity, the Reliant Foundation (formerly operated as the Reliant Medical Group Foundation) is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the health and well-being of individuals of all ages in the Central and Metro West regions of Massachusetts. The Reliant Foundation offers grants to non-profit organizations within its service area for the purpose of supporting programs that battle critical public health issues like the opioid epidemic, children's mental health and behavioral health. For more information, please visit www.reliantfoundation.org.