

# Panel: sense of community could aid addicts' recovery

By Jessica J. Burchard  
*The Winchester Star*

**Saturday, September 15, 2007**

**Winchester** — They all agree creating a sense of community could increase success rates of recovering drug addicts.

A panel of six residents — representing health care, pharmacy, and recovery groups —convened at the old Winchester Hospital, 333 West Cork St., on Friday for the "Winchester Addictions Forum."

The event was sponsored by **Bridging the Gaps**, a local integrative addictions treatment facility, in conjunction with other National Recovery Month activities — including the Walk for Recovery on Sept. 22.

All the panelists shared a desire to see addicts gain access to physiological, psychological, and spiritual support.

"Treatment has gotten very complicated. We don't have people with just one problem anymore," said Nancy Haden, program coordinator for Northwestern Community Services. "When we talk about treatment, we have to treat the whole person."

This means treating the physical signs of addiction, conducting therapy to discuss the origins of it, and even introducing some to faith-based or spiritual communities.

"I believe spirituality is essential if you're going to get in and stay in recovery," said Stan Stokes, president and founder of Bridging the Gaps. "You need to treat the physical part first. Then, as you grow, you need to look at it spiritually."



Carl Que Hickerson (right), senior pastor of the Destiny Baptist Church in Martinsburg, W.Va., and president of the Berkeley chapter of the NAACP, speaks during The Winchester Addictions Forum panel discussion. Karen K. Schultz, associate professor with the Shenandoah University School of Pharmacy and candidate for the Virginia State Senate listens.  
*(Rick Foster)*

Stokes was treated for alcoholism by the U.S. Air Force in 1973. He wanted to improvement treatment options and created a 12-step psychosocial program that focuses on rebalancing brain chemistry and building up the body through the use of oral and intravenous therapies.

Stokes commended Winchester on the number of treatment programs available. The city has 70 Alcoholics Anonymous and 35 meetings each week.

Drug and alcohol addictions are among the costliest illnesses in the country.

According to data from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration, substance abuse costs the country \$484 billion annually in health care costs, lost wages, and costs associated with crimes and accidents.

Karen K. Schultz, associate professor in Shenandoah University's School of Pharmacy and Democratic nominee for the Virginia State Senate, said she believes the needs of individuals dictate the treatment options.

"There's not one golden way of doing this. It's about raising awareness," she said. "Businesses, schools, faith-based organizations, and the health care community can all help raise awareness."

Awareness and treatment programs can save the nation billions. The National Institute on Drug Addiction found that the return is \$7 for every dollar put into treatment programs.

Schultz and the other participants agreed public education about addiction recovery is necessary for treatments to be successful.

Panel moderator Joan Volpe, former deputy director of the Fairfax/Falls Church Community Service Board, views the panel as a way to spread information.

"People don't know how to help," she said. "It's our responsibility to tell them how."

On the Internet...

[www.bridgingthegaps.com](http://www.bridgingthegaps.com)

— **Contact Jessica J. Burchard at**  
[jburchard@winchesterstar.com](mailto:jburchard@winchesterstar.com)