



## **FACING THE REALITY OF ADDICTION**

We all know about the opioid crisis. Check your phone or turn on the TV, and you'll be bombarded by horrifying statistics: according to the CDC, deaths from overdoses in the U.S. have more than quadrupled since 1999; on average, four North Carolinians die every day from opioid overdose; and in Georgia, deaths from prescription opioids have increased at least tenfold over the past eight years. These numbers are overwhelming, making it all too easy to respond to the crisis with despair or a numbness of the spirit even though we know the problem must be faced now or more of our family members, friends, and neighbors may fall prey to addiction.

To learn more about the opioid crisis in our area—and how to address it—please join the next meeting of the Public Policy Network (PPN) from 4:00 to 5:30 pm on Sunday, August 5<sup>th</sup>, at the Hinton Center in Hayesville, NC. The presentation, “Facing the Reality of Addiction in Western NC and North GA,” will be given by Cherokee County Sheriff Derrick Palmer and Barbara Honaker, Court Coordinator with the North Enotah Drug Court. Sheriff Palmer will examine the opioid crisis from the perspective of law enforcement. Sheriff of Cherokee County since 2014, Palmer graduated from Basic Law Enforcement Training in 1996 and has since worked as bailiff, patrol officer, patrol shift sergeant, and detective. He has served as a Special Drug Agent and a member of the Sheriff’s Emergency Response Unit; Sheriff Palmer is a certified S.W.A.T. operator and a graduate of Quantico Virginia’s Drug Enforcement Administration (D.E.A.) training center. He also developed a Gang Awareness and Investigative Unit for Cherokee County and the first Domestic Violence Response Unit in Cherokee County.

Barbara Honaker, Court Coordinator, will share her expertise with rehabilitation by focusing on the success of a judicially supervised drug treatment program available to adults in Towns and Union Counties as a productive alternative to incarceration. Ms. Honaker earned her Master of Arts Degree from Liberty University, and she is currently working towards her PhD. in Counseling. She has a wealth of experience in the field, having served as Case Manager and Investigator for the Department of Family and Children’s Services and as a Case Manager for the Floyd County Mental Health Department. The presentation, followed by a Q&A, is free and open to the public.

PPN’s mission is to encourage citizen participation in the democratic process through education, action, and advocacy. A volunteer civic organization, PPN monitors state and national policy proposals that affect individuals and our communities. We provide data, information, and resources to enable the citizens of western North Carolina and North Georgia to make informed decisions about policies that affect them.