

# The Roundtable

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[www.bangorbreakfastrotary.org](http://www.bangorbreakfastrotary.org)

*December 28, 2017*

## **The Drug Epidemic- It's Always "In Season"**

# Dr.

Ira Mandel turned on a light that just may shine closer to the end of the drug addiction tunnel. Dr. Mandel proposes that the Breakfast Rotary, as well as other clubs in District 7790, elect a representative to join the District 7780's "Recovery Initiative Committee."

Dr. Mandel is a family doctor who has treated 100s of patients over the past 10 years for drug addiction. He formed the "Mid-Coast Recovery Coalition" a year ago in response to almost no services being available to treat or to prevent drug addiction in Knox County. A year later there is much work to do, starting with

still trying to change negative or unsympathetic community attitudes about the problem and people with the disorder.

"Drug addiction is a disease, not a moral failure," he said.

Dr. Mandel is a member of the West Bay Rotary Club in Camden, part of District 7780. The District is helping communities respond to the ravaging opiod addiction. There is increased momentum to get Rotary International involved after the polio eradication mission.

In his area of Maine, "I am the only doctor treating opiod addiction." He gets thousands of calls a year, with a higher percentage from fishing communities. Ninety percent of the inmates in the Knox County Jail are addicted to drugs.

Continuing with the grim statistics, Dr. Mandel said nearly half of all Americans have a family member or a close friend who been addicted to drugs. Many people know that the problem exists, "but they don't see it." Drug users are clever at hiding their addiction.



Drug overdoses amount to at least 175 deaths a day. “That’s like a plane crash every day,” he said. “It is the leading cause of death for Americans under the age of 50.” In many cases, grandparents, who looked forward to retirement, have to care for the children of a drug overdose victim. “Children show up ‘feral’ at schools, meaning they have had no dental treatment or other health care.

The West Bay Rotary is adopting a Massachusetts model called “Learning to Cope.” A license to run the program costs \$15,000, for which the club is raising funds. It trains participants to be “recovery coaches.”

“My approach is detoxification,” Dr. Mandel said. “We need peer support, and to get users sober for at least three months.”

The brain is hijacked by drugs. Methadone and suboxone can help calm the cravings. “But once you’re addicted, you’re addicted for life.

Relapse is always possible.” The best solution is to prevent addiction in the first place.

“The teen years are the most vulnerable. Keep kids busy. Teach parents how to parent,” he said. He added that he is against legalizing marijuana, saying that this sends the wrong message to teenagers.

Dr. Mandel seeks one member from each of the District 7790 clubs to represent their clubs on the Recovery Initiative Committee. He expects the meetings to occur monthly using a conference call format.

Dr. Mandel can be reached at [imandel@aol.com](mailto:imandel@aol.com) or 701-1575.



## **Bragging Rights**

For those members who are in Florida and other warmer climates, we can say that we attended the December 28 meeting in (-)15 degree air. It was warmer inside, but it took a bit of energy to get there.

**VP Ken Nagle** rang an imaginary bell to start the meeting. The Happy Dollar department, managed today by **Ken Kimball**, collected from **June Kontio** who was happy that four out of five of her children were home for Christmas. **David Zelz** is happy and sad- happy that his brother is coming home, sad that David will have to return his brother’s dog to him. Ken reported that this is Kristy’s and his first full winter in their new office. Living upstairs makes the “commute” warm and brief.

*Les Myers- December 28, 2017*

*Ice Cap*

