

# Health and Human Services Agency

Shasta County

2650 Breslauer Way  
Redding, CA 96001  
(530) 229-8484  
FAX (530) 229-8447

## **P R E S S   R E L E A S E**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Marc Dadigan, Community Education Specialist, (530) 225-5970

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### **Forum of experts tackles stigma surrounding addiction**

SHASTA COUNTY – Substance abuse and addiction are common medical challenges, but many people don't seek help due to fear of harmful stigma and stereotypes. On Oct. 12, four panelists and a medical practitioner will address issues of stigma head-on, sharing their experiences with addiction and discussing the elements of recovery.

“Getting Clean II: A Forum on the Stigma of Addiction” is the second Stand Against Stigma public forum to raise community understanding of important issues related to substance use disorders and treatment. Music and a reception will be from 5 to 6 p.m., with the speaker forum and community dialogue from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Burney VFW Hall, 37410 Highway 299 E. in Burney.

Participants will cover topics including why relapse is so common, what motivated them to change their lives, and how the community can support people in recovery and remove the barriers that prevent them from fully reclaiming their lives. The audience is invited to ask questions. Panelists are:

- Crystal Johnson - parent leadership advocate, Shasta County Child Abuse Prevention Council.
- Greg Burgin Jr. - Wintu Tribe of Northern California Council member, White Bison facilitator.

- Kristen McChristian - Circle of Friends participant, Brave Faces/Stand Against Stigma advocate.
- James Herington - Shasta College student and Brave Faces/Stand Against Stigma advocate.
- Dr. Candy Stockton - Shingletown Medical Center.

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, more than 20 million American adults, about 8.4 percent of the population, had a substance use disorder (SUD) in 2014. About 7.9 million of them had both a mental health challenge and SUD, commonly referred to as co-occurring disorders. Stigmas persist, including the belief that addiction is a moral failing rather than a medical issue needing treatment and support.

This forum is sponsored by Shasta County Health and Human Services Agency in conjunction with its many community partners and advisory boards. Funding is provided through the Mental Health Services Act. To learn more about how Shasta County residents are changing minds about mental illness, visit [www.StandAgainstStigma.com](http://www.StandAgainstStigma.com).

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