

## Press Release

On May 2, 2015, TOPAC, Patty DiRenzo, Amanda Bent, and Trisha Day hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Commemorative Celebration of the signing of the Overdose Prevention Act (OPA) at the Old York Country Club in Chesterfield, NJ. The OPA has saved many lives already and will continue to do so in the years to come by offering protection from prosecution to those who call 911 in the event of an opioid overdose and by making the drug, naloxone, widely available. Since the passage of the OPA, naloxone has been used 852 times, by law enforcement alone, to reverse an opioid overdose. This does not include reversals by EMTs, paramedics, hospitals, and individuals. Because of the OPA, countless families and friends were spared the agony of burying a loved one. Every life saved is an opportunity for recovery.

We wish to extend our thanks to all of our speakers; Delia Downes, Assemblyman Dan Benson, NJ State Senator Joseph Vitale, Alicia Gibbons, Ashley Gibbons, Mariel Harrison, Patrolman Justin DiGiacomo, and Mark Manning. We also thank all law enforcement officers who utilize naloxone as first responders, particularly the many law enforcement officers who took time out of their busy schedules to join in the anniversary celebration of this landmark legislation.

A special thank you goes to Joseph D. Coronato, the Ocean County Prosecutor, for being our keynote speaker. Mr. Coronato has instituted many initiatives in Ocean County that hopefully will serve as a model throughout our state. We applaud him for all that he does to battle this devastating epidemic and hope that other counties will follow suit.

We concluded our evening of food and fellowship with a photo slide presentation of many of the young people who have lost their lives to addiction. Ernie White, a well known musician, performed his original composition "*Till We See You Again*", written in honor of the passing of Christopher Manning, during this portion of the program. Ernie's heart felt rendition was the highlight of the evening. There were far too many faces on the screen, and sadly, there could have been many more. Our work won't be completed until there are no more photos to be added.

Thank you to all of our attendees who made donations to help support this very important work.