

**Shrewsbury Coalition for Addiction Prevention and Education &
State Representative Hannah Kane Joint Press Release**

For Immediate Release

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**Nationally Recognized Speaker Dr. Ruth Potee to Present “Under Construction –
What every parent must know about your tween/teens brain development”
*Forum Hosted by the Shrewsbury Coalition for Addiction Prevention and Education (SCAPE)
and Sponsored by Representative Hannah Kane***

Shrewsbury, MA – On Thursday, November 16th, at 7pm at Shrewsbury High School in the auditorium, an important community awareness forum will be sponsored by Shrewsbury Coalition for Addiction Prevention and Education (SCAPE) and sponsored by Representative Hannah Kane, on adolescent brain development and its impact on teen risk taking, including alcohol and substance abuse.

This is an opportunity for elementary, middle-school and high school parents and all community members to learn from the latest medical science and research on adolescent development, particularly when it comes to healthy brain development. High school youth are welcome to attend.

Dr. Potee, a board-certified Family Physician and Addiction Medicine Physician, is a nationally featured speaker and recognized expert in the area of adolescent brain development and its impact on teenage risk taking. She has won compassionate care recognition for her approach to the disease of addiction and she blends scientific research with hands-on understanding of the challenges of raising healthy teens. Dr. Potee will share information in an approachable manner regarding brain chemistry, who's at risk, the role of genetics, the role of stress and trauma, and prevention and treatment options.

Dr. Potee chairs the Healthcare Solutions Opioid Task Force of Franklin County and she was honored as Massachusetts Medical Society Franklin District Clinician of the Year in 2015.

“Dr. Potee is a dynamic speaker who helps parents better understand the brain development in our youth and how and why risk-taking and substance abuse can be more prevalent for young people, and the life-long impact of early use of drug and alcohol. Given the opioid epidemic and the recent legalization of adult-use marijuana, I think this is a critical learning forum for parents,” stated Representative Hannah Kane (R-Shrewsbury).

Massachusetts is in the midst of an addiction epidemic, losing 4 individuals per day to overdose and death, and with thousands more individuals and families impacted by addiction. In Shrewsbury in 2016, six people died as a result of an opioid overdose, and many more suffered non-lethal overdoses. Few people in the Commonwealth are untouched by this disease. In light of the legalization of adult-use marijuana, it is also important to understand the increased risk of dependency when youth use and the long-term impacts on brain development. While one in eleven adults will become dependent on marijuana, the ratio drops to one in six for youth.

“Raising teenagers is difficult work and Dr. Potee can help all parents develop a better understanding of adolescent brain development and teens decision making processes which place every teen at risk. Addiction cuts across every socio-economic class, race, ethnicity, and gender and we have unfortunately seen the devastating impact of substance abuse, particularly opiate addiction, has had upon families in our community. If you can only attend one evening meeting per year, this is the one you should attend”, stated Shrewsbury High School Principal Todd Bazydlo.

This November 16th event will also feature **from 6pm to 7pm** resource and information tables from agencies and programs which work to prevent addiction, as well as support individuals and families with addiction and in recovery. The list of resources sharing information to date include: Boroughs Branch YMCA, Community Healthlink, Learn2Cope, Motivating Youth Recovery, Rockdale Recovery High School, Shrewsbury Youth and Family Services, Wicked Sober, Worcester Department of Public Health.

The Shrewsbury Coalition for Addiction Prevention and Education (SCAPE) is comprised of a wide representation of the community joining forces to help reduce substance abuse and its consequences and impact among youth and adults in Shrewsbury. The Coalition consists of representation from youth, parents, business, law enforcement, school and public service officials, community leaders, health care professionals, faith-based organizations, media, state and local government agencies, social service providers and other community representatives working collaboratively to identify and implement community-wide strategies to address issues concerning addiction prevention and education. SCAPE has previously held a community awareness forum on the Opioid Epidemic in April 2016 and a screening of the film “If Only” produced by James Wahlberg of the Mark Wahlberg Youth Foundation in October 2016.

For more information please contact Representative Hannah Kane at 617-722-2430 or RepHannahKane@gmail.com or Christine Mowry of Shrewsbury Youth and Family Services at 508-845-6932 ext. 306 or cmowry@syfs-ma.org. In addition, you can find out more information on Dr. Ruth Potee at ruthpotee.com