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Manchester, CT

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **The Change Collaborative of Manchester joins The Governor's Prevention Partnership's "Prevention Starts With You" Initiative**

The Change Collaborative of Manchester is proud to be joining The Governor Prevention Partnership's "Prevention Starts With You." This landmark initiative, the first of its kind in Connecticut, will address substance misuse through a robust public awareness campaign about the vital role that adults play in youth substance use prevention and the safe deactivation of unwanted or unneeded prescription drugs through new on-demand prevention technology and trainings.

The Change Collaborative, along with other partner organizations and agencies in the region, will distribute a total of 50,000 conversation starters and drug deactivation and disposal pouches to residents of Greater Hartford and New Haven over the next 11 months. The pouches can be used anywhere, anytime, and thrown into regular household trash, eliminating the risk of both misuse and a negative environmental impact. This initiative is expected to result in the elimination of more than two million unwanted pills or medications.

"We are so excited to be working with The Governor's Prevention Partnership to distribute these pouches to the Manchester community," Samantha Bell, Chair of the Change Collaborative of Manchester said. "It will really amplify our efforts of getting unused medications safely disposed of. We know that it takes a village to effectively address substance use at a local level, and this initiative is going to help us and our community partners do just that."

"We are proud to work with the great partners who have joined our "Prevention Is You" initiative," Kelly Juleson, Co-President of The Governor's Prevention Partnership said. "When it comes to prevention, the numbers don't lie. Young people with caring adults in their lives who talk to them about avoiding drugs and alcohol are 50% less likely to use later down the road."

"Prevention Starts With YOU" is a Congressionally Directed Spending project secured with the assistance of U.S. Senators Richard Blumenthal and Chris Murphy and is funded through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

"Medicine cabinets are ticking time bombs," Senator Blumenthal said. "They're full of stuff that is dangerous – opioids, painkillers, potentially addictive substances. We need to get them out of the medicine cabinets, get them out of homes... and dispose of them in a way that is safe health-wise and environmentally... and that's what these [pouches] will do."

"Prevention is one of the most effective tools we have to tackle the opioid epidemic," Senator Murphy said. "The federal funding we secured for this campaign is going to help save thousands of lives by ensuring kids know the dangers of misusing prescription drugs. No community has been spared in this crisis, and as a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee I'm continuing to push for funding that supports prevention and recovery efforts in our state."

For more information about the project, visit [PreventionCT.org](http://PreventionCT.org)

***The Change Collaborative of Manchester works toward building a vibrant, safe, and healthy community for our youth through substance use prevention.***