

As Communities Deploy Opioid Settlement Funds, APT Foundation Emphasizes the Role of Public Education and Outreach

NEW HAVEN, CT, UNITED STATES, June 18, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As

states and local agencies continue allocating opioid settlement funding, APT Foundation is encouraging policymakers and public health leaders to consider how public education and outreach efforts can help individuals and families better understand opioid use disorder and navigate available treatment options.

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Public education and outreach can help people recognize risk, understand their options, and take the next step toward care. However, consistent messaging is essential.”

Glen McDermott, Founder of Red Rock Branding

After 55 years of providing evidence-based care and more than a decade identifying and reducing barriers to care, APT Foundation has reduced treatment wait times from an average of three weeks to three hours under current APT leadership. The organization also recognizes that people will not reach out for services they do not understand, trust, or know how to access.

A National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) in 2024 by The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services

Administration (SAMHSA), estimates that 4.8 million people ages 12 years and over are living with Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) in the US. Fewer than one in 5 of those with the condition received no medication at all for opioid use disorder (known as MOUD.) MOUD is considered the gold standard for treating opioid use disorder and methadone is the most widely studied form of MOUD. Though methadone is safe, affordable and effective it is also [highly stigmatized](#), leading to reluctance among those living with opioid use disorder to engage in care or experiencing a lack of support to engage in MOUD.

To address this set of systemic challenges, APT Foundation partnered with Red Rock Branding last summer to launch Let's Break Barriers to Treatment, Medication for Opioid Use Disorder Works, a multi-channel public awareness campaign designed to address stigma and misinformation by discussing opioid use disorder as a treatable health condition. The campaign sought to increase understanding of the condition, promote compassion for affected individuals and families, and encourage more informed public dialogue.

"Communications alone will not solve the opioid crisis," says Dr. Lynn Madden, President and CEO of the APT Foundation. "But when paired with treatment, prevention, recovery, and harm reduction services, they can help communities maximize the impact of these investments and ensure more people know where to turn for help."

Implemented between June and September 2025 across Greater New Haven, Connecticut, the Let's Break Barriers campaign centered around a dedicated landing page and animated video, supported by a coordinated mix of social media (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, LinkedIn), digital advertising, transit and billboard advertising, broadcast media, and email outreach. A post-campaign survey was also conducted to assess awareness and perceptions.

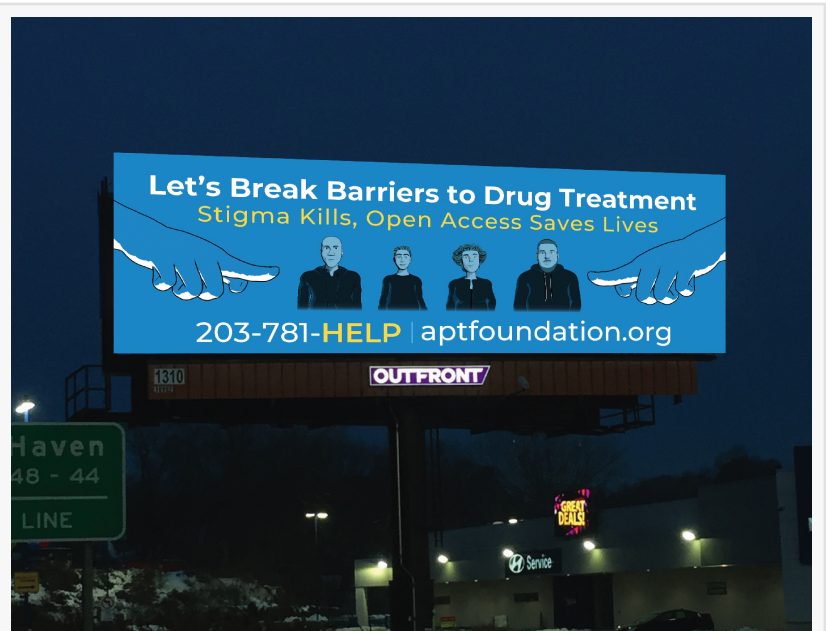
Primary audiences included adults aged 18 years and older, with targeted outreach to younger audiences through social media. Secondary audiences included local health departments, community-based organizations, advocacy groups, and community leaders.

During the campaign period, active website users increased by 44 percent, Instagram reach increased by 406 percent, and TikTok content generated more than 600,000 views. The post-campaign survey also showed improved recognition of overdose severity and increased understanding of addiction as a public health issue.

Moreover, the Let's Break Barriers campaign won multiple awards in 2025 for creative excellence, including The Viddy Awards (two Gold), Davey Awards (Gold, Silver), and a finalist for Shorty Awards.

"Public education and outreach can help people recognize risk, understand their options, and take the next step toward care," says Glen McDermott, Founder of Red Rock Branding. "However, consistent messaging is essential."

APT and Red Rock are in alignment so strongly about the issue that they offered a public webinar to municipal leaders and collaborating non-profit organizations about putting opioid settlement funds to good use. The next one will be held September 16, during national Recovery Month, with links to registration soon available on both organization's social media accounts.



A billboard gives exposure to APT Foundation's "Let's Break Barriers to Treatment" campaign created by Red Rock Branding.

About APT Foundation

The APT Foundation promotes health and recovery for individuals living with substance use disorders and/or mental illness by providing low-barrier, evidence-based treatment. Serving over 7,000 individuals annually across six clinical sites in New Haven County, APT offers same-day care through walk-in evaluations six days a week—welcoming all, regardless of ability to pay. As a leader in the Open Access Model, APT has reduced treatment wait times from weeks to hours and partners closely with the Connecticut Department of Corrections and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to reach justice-involved and other vulnerable populations. APT also engages in cutting-edge research supported by the NIH and regularly hosts community forums and overdose prevention training to raise awareness and expand access to care. Learn more at www.aptfoundation.org

About Red Rock Branding

Red Rock Branding is a purpose-driven virtual agency based in New Haven, Connecticut, specializing in strategic marketing and communications. The award-winning agency often partners with public health organizations to deliver campaigns that drive measurable impact—guided by the belief that a healthier world starts with healthier people. Learn more at www.redrockbranding.com.

Jennifer Carmichael

Red Rock Branding

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