

Press Release

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Dr. Sharon Harris 516- 676-2008

safeglencove@yahoo.com

SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: CDC on Opioid Epidemic

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is a federal agency that conducts and supports health promotion, prevention and preparedness activities in the United States, with the goal of improving overall public health. Robert Redfield, Director of the CDC and known as “The federal government’s top disease fighter”, who built his career battling the emergence of HIV/AIDS in the 1980s, says the opioid epidemic will be even worse.

Redfield has dubbed the overprescription and abuse of painkillers the “public health crisis of our time” and said it will take a massive effort to combat the problem. In an interview conducted by The Washington Times, Redfield said the opioids-fueled epidemic is clearly already more deadly than the AIDS epidemic ever was.

The CDC is working with states and pharmacies to track the opioid epidemic in real time and collect salient data on overdose deaths more rapidly. Official 2017 figures are scheduled for release this fall. The public response to the crisis has been relying on data from 2016, when 42,000 Americans were killed from opioids alone.

According to Redfield, it is unclear what the new figures will reveal, but many researchers believe opioid-related deaths will eclipse the 48,000 lives that HIV/AIDS claimed in 1995, its most deadly year. Either way, drug addiction already is exacting a bigger annual toll. All overdose deaths, not just opioids deaths are over 60,000 now. Redfield sees a number of parallels to the HIV/AIDS crisis. Responses suffered from an empathy gap, particularly at the start, when too many people saw the disease as the result of risky behavior.

Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) is viewed as a medical disorder that, according to Redfield, will take scientific breakthroughs and a massive public health effort to track the opioid epidemic and improve treatment options.

The SAFE Glen Cove Coalition is conducting an opioid prevention awareness campaign entitled "Keeping Glen Cove SAFE" to educate and update the community regarding opioid use and its consequences. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or visit SAFE’s website to learn more about the Opioid Epidemic at www.safeglencove.org.

To read this article in The Washington Times please visit <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2018/jul/8/robert-redfield-cdc-director-opioid-epidemic-worse/>.