

Press Release
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT:
Dr. Sharon Harris 516- 676-2008
safeglencove@yahoo.com

SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: Opioid Use and College Campuses

The deadly opioid epidemic is spreading concern across the nation. Some say that colleges should be even more aware and concerned of their students using opioids. When students get to college they are more easily exposed and 'free' to trying new things than ever before. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 are at higher risks of using opioids and having an opioid overdose than other ages. In fact, in 2015 there were 772 deaths of students between the ages of 15 to 19. Teenagers are applying and beginning college between the ages of 15 to 19.

In colleges the opioids that students may use include prescription pain killers like Vicodin and Oxycontin as well as heroin. These drugs can be highly addictive. Research has shown that students who are addicted to Opioids usually never make it to college or eventually drop out or even overdose by freshman year. Some colleges like the University of Maryland, Ohio State University, Rutgers and some others have started a recovery dorm program. The University of Maryland hopes to have a substance recovery program on their off-campus house.

The use of opiates by college students has risen dramatically over the past two decades, resulting in increased accidental overdose among other things; thus making the quest for identifying strategies to address this public health crisis essential. Researchers are now aiming to explore the prevalence, risk factors, and interventions for college students suffering from opiate use disorders. A presentation at the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry annual meeting highlighted the issue of nonmedical opioid use among college students and the need for successful prevention and treatment strategies for the patient population.

From 1993 to 2005, use of prescription opioids increased by 343% among college students. One in four universities had an annual prescription opioid use prevalence of 10% or higher. Previous research has shown college students who use prescription opioids nonmedically are more likely to engage in other risky behaviors and have increased risk for unintentional overdose.

Nonmedical use of prescription opioids was higher among college students who were white, residents of fraternity/sorority houses and off-campus houses, had lower grade-point averages and attended more competitive colleges.

These risk factors led to an increase in substance-free housing on college campuses; however, there is currently no research supporting efficacy of this housing.

Psychopharmacological treatment is challenging among college students due to high dropout and relapse rates.

According to the article, nonmedical use of prescription opiates is second only to marijuana as the most common form of drug use among college students in the United States and is associated with lower school performance and increased risky behavior, therefore, it is essential to continue developing prevention and treatment strategies aimed at reducing prescription drug abuse and possible escalation to more dangerous forms of opiates (ie, heroin), which increases morbidity and mortality.

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) is a United States federal-government research institute whose mission is to "lead the Nation in bringing the power of science to bear on drug abuse and addiction." For more information about NIDA please visit <http://www.drugabuse.gov>.

To read the full research article published by the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry please visit [www.jaacap.com/article/S0890-8567\(17\)30633-0/fulltext](http://www.jaacap.com/article/S0890-8567(17)30633-0/fulltext).

The SAFE Glen Cove Coalition is conducting an opioid prevention awareness campaign entitled, "Keeping Glen Cove SAFE," in order 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.