

Press Release
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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: Underlying Concerns of Suicide in the Opioid Epidemic

An article recently published in the Psychiatric Times indicates the opioid epidemic has underlying concerns of suicide. Many studies conducted have found a link between substance use disorder and suicide risk. A recent psychiatric study showed that individuals in drug treatment programs have had past suicide attempts and/or suicidal thoughts. Many additional factors come into play for individuals with substance abuse problems, such as issues with mental health problems, violent behavior and even depression, which are all linked together with suicide.

Rates of opioid overdoses and suicides combined have increased significantly within recent years. In fact, suicides alone have increased by 33% since 1999. In the United States suicide is the 11th leading cause of death with 34,000 deaths per year. Individuals who have attempted suicide are at an even risk. Drug overdoses in America are the leading cause of death in Americans under the age of 50. Drug overdose deaths and suicides combined are becoming an epidemic in itself per the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

According to the Psychiatric Times, male veterans with opioid use disorder and/or other substance abuse dependency were 2-3 times more likely to commit suicide than those without a substance problem. In addition, underlying factors can play a role into why an individual has had a suicide attempt or suicidal thought. For example, individuals with substance abuse problems are often depressed which links to suicide. Also, those with mental health problems have been linked to suicidal tendencies. According to the Psychiatric Times, 90% of all individuals that had committed suicide had been diagnosed with a psychiatric condition. In fact, individuals with both mental health problems and a substance problem are at an extremely high risk of attempting suicide or committing suicide.

Substance abuse users also have a tendency to become violent, which is found to be a risk factor for suicide. Those individuals who began substance abuse treatment, up to 75% of them have reported being violent in their past. Violent behavior in those with substance abuse problems has proved difficult when trying to control their behavior therefore they have a greater risk toward suicide attempts.

It is important to know the signs of suicide especially for someone with a substance abuse problem. It is important to call 911 if someone is threatening to kill themselves or take them to the nearest emergency room if you can safely. Individuals that have suicidal thoughts don't want to take their own life but simply want to end their pain and suffering and see no other alternatives. Signs of suicide are different for each person. Don't dismiss the signs of suicide and get help immediately. If you or someone you may know is or you think may commit suicide contact the *National Suicide Prevention Lifeline* at 1-800-273-8255.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation. SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities. For more information please visit www.samhsa.gov.

The Psychiatric Times is a medical trade publication written for an audience involved in the profession of psychiatry and is distributed to about 50,000 psychiatrists monthly. For more information please visit www.psychiatristimes.com.

Founded by SAMHSA, The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a United States-based suicide prevention network of 161 crisis centers that provides a 24/7, toll-free hotline available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. For more information please visit <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>.

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.