

Press Release

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### **SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: Federal Opioid Legislation and How School Districts Can Address the Opioid Epidemic**

A recent article in Education Week discusses new legislative action to address the opioid epidemic in schools. The opioid crisis has become a top issue for schools across the country who have been coping with orphaned children and with others facing serious emotional trauma.

Congress recently passed legislation that will help schools and communities cope with some of the challenges of educating kids from families grappling with opioid addiction. The legislation authorizes \$50 million in grants per year for the next five years to help states and school districts implement schoolwide behavioral interventions and supports for students who have experienced trauma.

The money could be used to develop partnerships between school districts and mental health programs to help with screening, referral, and treatment, or to provide professional development to teachers, school leaders, and others to help students cope with trauma. The grants are supposed to be equitably distributed among urban, rural, tribal, and suburban areas. Additionally, \$10 million per year for five years will be dedicated to helping school districts and nonprofit organizations treat and prevent substance abuse disorders in children and young adults. The grants will be awarded competitively by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and can be used for counseling, job-training, and more. HHS will create a resource center to help disseminate best practices in substance abuse treatment and prevention in states and school districts.

The U.S. Department of Education is joining other Federal agencies in combating the opioid crisis. While the causes of opioid misuse are complex and determined by multiple factors, the goals of prevention and recovery focus on reducing risk and promoting factors that increase resiliency. Schools play an important role in reaching these goals. The Department is taking a two pronged approach to addressing the opioid crisis: 1) Helping to educate students, families and educators about the dangers of opioid misuse and about ways to prevent and overcome opioid addiction and 2) Supporting State and local education agency efforts to prevent and reduce opioid misuse.

According to the Department of Education, school leaders, teachers and staff schools can play a role in the following ways: Create safe environments and positive cultures for students; Educate students, each other and families about the dangers of drug use and about how to prevent opioid misuse and

addiction; Provide evidence-based prevention programs; Mitigate risk factors that can make students vulnerable to engaging in dangerous behavior; Boost protective factors and increase student engagement; Be prepared if an opioid overdose occurs on school grounds; Support students in recovery and students whose family members are suffering from addiction.

Education Week is an independent news organization that has covered K–12 education since 1981. It is known for providing both news and analysis, along with explanatory and investigative journalism across a range of digital, print, and broadcast platforms as well as through live and virtual events. For more information please visit [www.edweek.org](http://www.edweek.org).

The mission of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) to enhance and protect the health and well-being of all Americans by providing for effective health and human services and fostering advances in medicine, public health, and social services. For more information please visit [www.hhs.gov](http://www.hhs.gov).

The United States Department of Education is a Cabinet-level department of the United States government whose primary functions are to "establish policy for, administer and coordinate most federal assistance to education, collect data on US schools, and to enforce federal educational laws regarding privacy and civil rights." For more information please visit [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov).

SAFE, Inc. is the only alcohol and substance abuse prevention, intervention and education agency in the City of Glen Cove. Its 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](https://www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition) or visit SAFE's website to learn more about the Opioid Epidemic at [www.safeglencove.org](http://www.safeglencove.org).