

Press Release  
December 31, 2018  
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### **SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: Prevention's Role in the Opioid Epidemic**

An article recently written by Dr. Deb Houry, Director of the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control maintains the opioid epidemic can be curbed by emphasizing prevention first, rather than limit focus to alleviating the aftermath and in this fight, patients and physicians are equally vital.

America's growing opioid epidemic makes no racial, gender, class or educational distinctions. As it touches more and more people, any one of us might be called to the frontlines to do our part to protect our loved ones. In step with opioid use, opioid overdose deaths continue to rise; rural communities are among the hardest hit. The Country is seeing increases in babies born dependent on opioids — up to 1 in 30 births in some states. Over the past 20 years, the opioid epidemic has spread rapidly across America, taking lives, shattering families, and leaving communities with limited resources to respond. Between 2000 and 2015, more than 300,000 Americans lost their lives to opioids, both prescription and illicit. During that same period, we have learned more about the addictive properties of prescription opioids and how physicians and patients together can find ways to manage pain using safer and more effective treatments.

Intervention- Benjamin Franklin wisely stated, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." In America, 3 out of 4 heroin users reported previous misuse of prescription opioids. Reducing exposure to prescription opioids, for situations where the risks of opioids outweigh the benefits, is a crucial part of prevention. The Centers for Drug Control and Prevention (CDC), other federal agencies, public health, and law enforcement are all working together with states to set up systems to better and more quickly report opioid overdoses. Better identifying communities at risk allows us to better provide them with the tools they need. For example, when communities experiencing rapid increases of opioid overdoses are identified, focus can be placed on prevention efforts through awareness about the general risks of opioid use, as well as best practices specific to prescription opioids.

Anyone struggling with opioid addiction to prescription opioids, illicit fentanyl or heroin can benefit from access to services such as medication-assisted treatment, which combines the use of medications with counseling and behavioral therapies. Naloxone effectively reverses opioid overdoses when administered in time and expanding its use can prevent overdose deaths in these communities.

Any given day, individuals may find themselves on the frontlines of America's opioid epidemic. Dr. Houry maintains the key to the nation's revitalization is to be armed with knowledge about the issue. Houry further urges that whether you are a physician, a patient, a friend or family member, or a concerned community member, get online and become familiar with the resources there to help you learn more about preventing and responding to this crisis.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control's mission is to provide leadership in preventing and controlling injuries, i.e., reducing the incidence, severity, and adverse outcomes of injury, the leading cause of death for those aged 1 – 44. For more information please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/injury/index.html>.

To read this article please visit <http://www.futureofpersonalhealth.com/advocacy/on-the-frontlines-of-americas-opioid-epidemic>.

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