

Press Release
January 14, 2019
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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: West Virginia's Proposed Opioid Response Plan

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) West Virginia suffers from the highest rate of drug overdose mortality in the United States, (57.8 per 100,000). Driving this public health crisis is the opioid epidemic, a dual challenge involving both prescribed opioids, such as oxycontin, and illicit opioids, including heroin and fentanyl.

In February 2018, the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) provided a summary of the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources Opioid Response Plan for the State of West Virginia. This comprehensive plan was created through public engagement and consultation with regional and national experts including representatives from West Virginia University, Marshall University, and Johns Hopkins University to review public input, data, information from senior state officials, and best practices from around the country to provide a focused set of high priority, short-term recommendations. These high priority, short-term recommendations are as follows:

Prevention: Expand the authority of medical professional boards and public health officials to stop inappropriate prescribing of pain medications and limit the duration of initial opioid prescriptions.

Early Intervention: Expand awareness of substance use disorder as a treatable disease by developing a public education campaign to address misinformation and associated stigma; Expand promising law-enforcement diversion programs to help people experiencing a drug problem access treatment and achieve sustained recovery; Strengthen support for lifesaving comprehensive harm reduction policies, by removing legal barriers to programs that are based on scientific evidence and by adding resources.

Treatment: Reflecting the need for all patients to have access to multiple options for treatment, West Virginia should require a statewide quality strategy for opioid use disorder treatment and remove unnecessary regulatory barriers to the expansion of effective treatment as well as expand access to effective substance use disorder treatment in hospital emergency departments and the criminal justice system, in order to reach people at key moments of opportunity.

Overdose Reversal: Require all first responders to carry naloxone and be trained in its use, support community-based naloxone programs, authorize a standing order for naloxone prescriptions to improve insurance coverage and require hospital emergency departments and

Emergency Medical Services to notify the Bureau of Public Health of nonfatal overdoses for the purpose of arranging for outreach and services.

Supporting Families with Substance Use Disorder: Expand effective programs that serve families, including Drug Free Moms and Babies, home visitation programs, and comprehensive services for the families of children born with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome; Expand access to long-acting reversible contraception and other contraceptive services for men and women with substance use disorder in multiple settings.

Recovery: Continue pursuing a broad expansion of peer based supports.

The state of West Virginia's proactive proposal may serve as a model for the other four states ranked with the highest opioid fatality rate: Ohio, Pennsylvania, District of Columbia and Kentucky. There are no quick fixes to the opioid epidemic. Adopting these recommendations, however, will put West Virginia on a path to turn the corner to prevent and reduce opioid use disorder.

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. For more information please visit www.cdc.gov.

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) is the National Institute on Drug Abuse 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 West Virginia's proposal please visit <https://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/opioids/opioid-summaries-by-state/west-virginia-opioid-summary>

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 or visit SAFE's website to learn more about the Opioid Epidemic at www.safeglencove.org.