

Press Release
August 5, 2019
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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: CDC Reports Modest Decrease in Opioid Deaths

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that the total number of drug overdose deaths in the United States declined in 2018, by 5.1 percent, the first annual decline in nearly three decades. The raw numbers of deaths 68,577 in 2018, vs. 72,224 in 2017 are still overwhelmingly high however progress has been made by federal, state and local mobilization efforts against drug addiction, which has emphasized treatment and availability of the life-saving opioid antidote naloxone. The CDC maintains 59 percent of the decline in overall drug deaths could be attributed exclusively to a reduction in those caused by prescription opioids. More cautious prescribing practices by doctors, partly because of CDC guidelines issued in 2016, have curbed the once-rampant supply of these addictive medications, saving many lives.

Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) data demonstrate the pharmaceutical industry — manufacturers, distributors and retailers — practically flooded the United States with opioids in the pre-guideline period. And of the 76 billion oxycodone and hydrocodone pills supplied between 2006 and the peak year of opioid prescriptions, a disproportionate number reached rural communities such as Appalachia who received 306 pills for each of its about 4,000 residents during those seven years. Additionally, counties with the most pills distributed per person experienced more than three times the national death rate from opioid overdoses. The data is critical, both to the ongoing effort to hold accountable those responsible and to help prevent a repetition by continuing to reduce the supply of prescription opioids thereby reducing overdoses without overcorrecting to the detriment of patients for whom opioids remain necessary and appropriate.

The CDC researchers perceive the first two decades of the 21st century as a time of an avoidable public health crisis whose effects touched every aspect of national life, from medical practice to electoral politics. First, though, efforts must be redoubled to insure that the epidemic does, indeed, become a thing of the past.

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. To learn more about the CDC please visit www.cdc.gov.

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

