Press Release

January 28, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: Addressing the Opioid Crisis in 2020

According to the web article in Drug Topics the opioid crisis continues to be one of the worst public health crises that the United States has ever seen. Opioids— mainly synthetic opioids (other than methadone)—are currently the main cause of drug overdose deaths. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), opioids were involved in 47,600 overdose deaths in 2017 which equates to 67.8% of all drug overdose fatalities. Approximately 2.1 million Americans live with opioid use disorder.

CDC researchers maintain there has been some modest improvements albeit slow to arise. Opioid prescribing has declined since 2012, and July 2019 demonstrated a 5.1% decline in overdose deaths for the first time since 1990. Increased awareness, appropriate education regarding opioid risks and benefits, and education on non-pharmacologic and non-opioid alternatives have improved prescribing practices.

The federal government continues to address the crisis with new regulations. In the summer of 2019, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued new guidance guide , "Opioid Analgesic Drugs: Considerations for Benefit-Risk Assessment Framework," which describes the application of the benefit-risk assessment framework that the agency uses in evaluating applications for opioid analgesic drugs. Normally, when deciding whether to approve a new drug, the FDA only looks at the risks and benefits to patients who take it as directed, not risks to everyone else. Under its new proposal, the FDA will consider whether a new opioid works better than other painkillers—opioid and non-opioid—that are already on the market. Officials will also analyze a new drug's potential impact on public health." For example, does it have characteristics that might tempt people to misuse it, such as it being very potent, or easy to crush, dissolve, and inject.

Additionally, the FDA is using its authority under the Substance Use-Disorder Prevention that Promotes Opioid Recovery and Treatment for Patients and Communities (SUPPORT) Act of 2018 to mandate short-duration packaging for outpatient dispensing of certain solid, oral dosage forms of immediate-release opioid analgesics to treat acute pain and require manufacturers to develop technologies such as mailback pouches to dispose of unused opioid medications. The FDA also plans to announce changes to strengthen the Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy for transmucosal immediate-release fentanyl medicines, and issue updated guidance to promote the development of non-opioid drugs to treat pain. The FDA is focused on securing the legitimate supply chain and doing more to hold distributors responsible. Under the Drug Supply Chain Security Act (DSCSA), manufacturers, re-packagers, wholesale distributors, and dispensers—which are all mainly pharmacies—are all required to have systems and processes in place to quarantine and investigate suspect and illegitimate medications.

The FDA plans to ensure that entities responsible for maintaining the supply chain take measurable steps under the law to appropriately track and trace opioid medications as these products move through the supply chain, and to respond to incidents involving illegitimate products to protect the public health.

On another front, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), which is responsible for keeping controlled substances from being diverted for abuse and sets a quota for how many opioid pills drug makers are allowed to produce in the United States. Along with input from the FDA and drug manufacturers, the DEA is proposing that appropriate quota reductions be made only after estimating the potential for pills to be sold illegally. Under the proposal, the diversion potential would be based on rates of overdose deaths and abuse, as well as the overall public health impact related to specific controlled substances.

States also issue their own laws regarding drugs, which generally address limiting initial prescription quantities, requiring prescribers to query the state's prescription drug monitoring program prior to prescribing, requiring provider education or training as well as patient education, and requiring co-prescribing of naloxone, the opioid reversal agent.

Drug Topics, published by MJH Life Sciences is a medical media company in the United States serving clinical, practical, and business information needs. They engage decision-makers who cover the patient care spectrum from primary care physicians and specialists who diagnosis and treat, to payers and pharmacists who influence how care is provided. To learn more about Drug Topics please visit www.drugtopics.com or read the full article at https://www.drugtopics.com/pain/addressing-opioid-crisis-2020

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 Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is a federal agency of the United States Department of Health and Human Services responsible for protecting and promoting public health. For more information please visit www.fda.gov.

The United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) is a United States federal law enforcement agency under the United States Department of Justice, tasked with combating drug smuggling and distribution within the United States. For more information please visit www.dea.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 or visit SAFE's website to learn more about the Opioid Epidemic at www.safeglencove.org.