

Press Release

August 17, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: Patients' Trauma Perpetuates the Nation's Overdose Epidemic

According to the American Medical Association (AMA), the nation's drug overdose epidemic continues to evolve and more Americans than ever are dying from overdose related to illicitly manufactured fentanyl and fentanyl analogs as well as methamphetamine, cocaine and heroin.

The AMA Opioid Task Force maintains it is critical to not concentrate on any one particular substance, but to focus on preventing substance-use disorder (SUD), removing barriers to treatment, and delivering equitable, sustainable and easily accessible care. Most importantly, ongoing trauma has had quite a negative impact on marginalized and minoritized communities.

This trauma is often perpetuated by the lack of community-based prevention, intervention and access to treatment—especially culturally competent care—as well as the lack of addressing cultural stigma related to seeking treatment in communities of color. Additionally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has data showing that exposure to trauma not only can lead to SUDs, but also cardiovascular disease, diabetes and other health concerns.

Nearly 71,000 Americans died from an unintentional drug overdose last year. Now, layered on top of this ongoing epidemic is the COVID-19 pandemic and there are reports of overdose surges across the U.S. The physical distancing necessary to slow the spread of COVID-19 can potentially create more anxiety and feelings of isolation that may trigger substance use.

The AMA indicates there are some encouraging signs to this epidemic such as growing treatment capacity, growing access to naloxone, and fewer opioid prescriptions being written, although patients with pain report ongoing challenges in obtaining nonopioid pain care. Also, the federal government has authorized physicians to provide patients with increased amounts of take-home doses of methadone as well as authorizing physicians to start a buprenorphine regimen without an in-person visit.

The American Medical Association is the largest association of physicians—both MDs and DOs—and medical students in the United States. Its mission is "to promote the art and science of medicine and the betterment of public health." For more information please visit www.ama-assn.org.

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.

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 COVID-19 and Opioid Epidemics please visit www.safeglencove.org.