

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: CDC: Overdose Deaths Top 100,000 Annually for the First Time

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), recent provisional data suggest more than 100,000 people died of drug overdoses in the US during the 12-month pandemic period ending in April 2021 making America's drug epidemic the deadliest that has ever been reported. That's a new record high, with overdose deaths jumping 28.5% from the same period a year earlier and nearly doubling over the past five years. The Covid-19 pandemic and the rise in use of fentanyl have both been key contributors to the rising overdose death toll, experts say. As of 2016, drug overdoses have killed about as many Americans as car accidents and gun violence combined. Now, drug overdoses cause about twice as many deaths.

The latest provisional data on drug overdose deaths captures those occurring in May 2020 through April 2021. Covid-19 killed about 509,000 people in that same timeframe, according to the data. What we're seeing are the effects of these patterns of crisis and the appearance of more dangerous drugs at much lower prices. In a crisis of this magnitude, those already taking drugs may take higher amounts and those in recovery may relapse. However, the rise in fentanyl a stronger and faster-acting drug than natural opiates has made those effects even more deadly. Increasing use of the synthetic drug caught the attention of experts before Covid-19 hit, but the pandemic may have exacerbated the problem. With international travel limited, synthetics that are easier to manufacture and more concentrated were likely more efficient to smuggle across borders, experts maintain.

The US government has seized enough fentanyl this year to give every American a lethal dose, Drug Enforcement Administration Administrator Anne Milgram said Wednesday at a White House press briefing, calling the overdose epidemic in the US "a national crisis" that "knows no geographical boundaries, and it continues to get worse." The new federal data shows that overdose deaths from methamphetamine and other psychostimulants also increased significantly, up 48% in the year ending April 2021 compared to the year before. They accounted for more than a quarter of all overdose deaths in the latest 12-month period. While fentanyl was once more popular on the East Coast and methamphetamine on the West Coast,

both have now proliferated nationwide.

Deaths from cocaine and prescription pain medication also increased compared with a year earlier, but not as drastically. As the country reopens and society returns to some pre-pandemic normalcy, experts believe people will continue to die from drug overdoses at very high rates if action isn't taken to significantly improve access to treatment. Last month, the US Department of Health and Human Services released an overview of the Biden Administration's plan to combat drug overdoses. It includes measures aimed at addressing opioid prescription practices and removing barriers to treatments, as well as recovery support and federal support for harm reduction strategies.

Last week the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy released a model law, providing states with a template to pass their own legislation to improve access to naloxone, a drug that reverses opioid overdoses. The evidence is clear that using medications to treat opioid addiction disorders saves lives.

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.