

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: SAMHSA Commitment to Prevent Overdoses

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) released two reports reflecting the federal commitment to prevent overdoses and expand access to buprenorphine.

In August 2022, SAMHSA convened a Policy Priority Roundtable with pharmacy organizations, state health departments, nonprofit associations, academic institutions, and people with lived experiences as pharmacy organizations called for an opportunity to engage directly with federal agencies about challenges affecting buprenorphine supply.

In response to this issue, SAMHSA joined other federal partners to jointly host a town hall where participants, including pharmacy organizations involved in buprenorphine distribution, discussed challenges and solutions to increase access to this life-saving medication. Suggestions included ensuring consistent and clear messaging around the importance of increasing pharmacy access and expanding where buprenorphine can be dispensed, such as community behavioral health centers, federally qualified health centers, and other community providers.

SAMHSA continues to encourage pharmacies, manufacturers, and trade organizations to work together to expand access to buprenorphine in pharmacies. Expanding access to buprenorphine is an important part of the HHS Overdose Prevention Strategy. Now in its third year, the strategy supports a broad harm reduction approach to substance use treatment, which involves meeting people where they are without judgment or stigma. The Strategy consists of four main pillars:

- **Primary Prevention** - Promotes tiered, multidisciplinary prevention activities, ranging from population-level strategies to targeted interventions aimed at high-risk individuals. These activities engage health and human services providers directly and facilitate cross-sector collaboration on prevention to address key upstream risk and protective factors.
- **Harm Reduction** - Evidence-based harm reduction strategies minimize negative consequences of drug use. These activities further expand access to harm reduction interventions such as opioid overdose reversal medications and fentanyl and xylazine test strips and better integrate harm reduction into specialty and general medical care.
- **Evidence-Based Treatment** - Focuses on reducing barriers to accessing the most effective treatments, including medications for opioid use disorder, using motivational and cultural enhancements to encourage those who might be reluctant, advancing strategies to

improve engagement and retention, and continuing to develop new therapeutic approaches.

- Recovery Support - These strategies recognize that treatment alone may not be enough to support long-term recovery. Despite the demonstrated benefits of recovery support services — such as peer supports, employment and housing services, various challenges impede their availability and uptake. Enhancing coverage and integration of recovery support services is critical to promoting access to and use of these services. Strengthening the recovery support services workforce is also essential to promoting access and quality.

SAFE is the only alcohol and substance use prevention agency in Glen Cove. Its Coalition is conducting an opioid prevention awareness campaign entitled. “Keeping Glen Cove SAFE,” 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/safeglencove coalition or visit SAFE’s website to learn more about the Opioid Epidemic at www.safeglencove.org.