

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Dr. Sharon Harris

516- 676-2008

safeglencove@yahoo.com

SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: National Institutes of Health Addressing the Underpinnings of the Opioid Crisis

Use and misuse of opioids, opioid use disorder, overdose deaths, and lack of effective pain management is an urgent public health challenge in the United States. As the opioid crisis evolves, HEAL continues to support cutting-edge research approaches to speed scientific solutions to these challenges. The Helping to End Addiction Long-term Initiative, or National Institutes of Health HEAL Initiative, is an effort to utilize scientific solutions to stem the national opioid public health crisis. Launched in April 2018, the initiative has focused on improving prevention and treatment strategies for opioid misuse and addiction and enhancing pain management.

According to NIH:

- More than 9 million Americans ages 12 and older misused opioids in the past year, and more than 5.5 million live with opioid use disorder.
- More than 100,000 people have been dying annually from drug overdoses, and 75% of those deaths involve opioids (including highly potent synthetic opioids like fentanyl, often in combination with other drugs like stimulants).
- Mental health conditions often occur alongside addiction and pain conditions; therefore, the nation's mental health crisis has had a significant impact on pain and addiction.
- Fifty million U.S. adults live with chronic pain, half of whom have severe pain every day. Nearly 20 million people suffer from pain that interferes with their daily lives.
- Pain management strategies are often not accessible and inadequate.

The drug overdose crisis began 40 years ago, driven by heroin and crack/cocaine use. In the 1990s, it shifted to prescription opioids due to widespread overprescribing of opioid medicines for pain relief. The public health crisis of poorly managed pain, opioid misuse, addiction, and overdose in America is now in its fourth wave:

- Prescription opioids were marketed aggressively to treat pain (1990s to 2000s).

- Significant reductions in appropriate opioid prescribing occurred without safer alternatives to pain management.
- Overdose deaths began to be driven by heroin (2010).
- Synthetic opioids such as fentanyl flooded the illicit market and became the leading cause of overdose deaths beginning in 2016.
- Overdose deaths involving co-use of stimulants such as methamphetamine and cocaine are on the rise and new threats continue to emerge.

As the drug landscape continues to change, solutions are urgently needed to prevent and treat opioid misuse, opioid use disorder, and overdose. As the continued challenges in management of complex and diverse pain conditions are exacerbated by the lack of effective pain therapies, solutions are needed to provide personalized and coordinated effective pain care.

Heal research can provide scientific evidence that can help change health policy and practice for opioid use disorder, drug overdose, and pain management.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH): NIH, the nation's medical research agency, includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIH is the primary federal agency conducting and supporting basic, clinical, and translational medical research, and is investigating the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit www.nih.gov

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.