

Press Release

August 31, 2026

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: International Overdose Awareness Day

On August 31 of each year, International Overdose Awareness Day (IOAD) is recognized globally as a day to remember and grieve those that we've lost, take action to encourage support and recovery, and help end overdose by spreading awareness about drug overdose prevention. Join us as an IOAD partner by using your voice and platforms to spread messages about ending overdose.

According to the CDC, overdoses are the leading injury-related cause of death in the United States. Opioids, mainly illegally made fentanyl, are involved in the highest percentage of overdose deaths. Ways to prevent opioid overdose are to improve opioid prescribing, reduce exposure to opioids, prevent illegal opioid use and prescription opioid misuse, and treat opioid use disorder.

Opioid use disorder and overdoses are preventable. With early action illegal substance use, including illegal opioids, and misuse of prescription medications, like opioids, that can lead to substance use disorders can be prevented.

Substance use disorders, like opioid use disorder (OUD), impact communities across America. Prevention activities help educate and support individuals, families, and communities and are critical for maintaining both individual and community health.

Opioid Use Disorder (OUD), sometimes referred to as "opioid dependence" or "opioid addiction," is a problematic pattern of opioid use that causes significant impairment or distress. OUD is a medical condition that can affect anyone – regardless of race, sex, income level, or social class. Like many other medical conditions, evidence-based treatments are available for OUD, but seeking treatment remains stigmatized. Stigma can be a major barrier to how well prevention and treatment programs work amid the opioid crisis.

Stigma or the fear of stigma may stop someone from sharing their health condition with partners or family members. Stigma may come from a specific person, including a loved one or clinician, or from the larger community. People seeking treatment for OUD may find that some clinicians

have stigmatizing attitudes about OUD. Stigmatizing attitudes toward people with OUD among clinicians can create barriers for those seeking the health services they need. People who experience health-related stigma may also experience less access to treatment or reduced adherence to treatments.

OUD significantly contributes to overdose deaths among people who use illegal opioids or misuse prescription opioids. Opioids—mainly synthetic opioids like illegally made fentanyl—are currently the most represented in overdose deaths.

A recent study among 29 states and the District of Columbia showed the percentage of overdose deaths involving counterfeit pills more than doubled from July 2019 to December 2021, and more than tripled in the Western United States. These pills are dangerous because they typically appear as pharmaceutical pills but often contain illegally made fentanyl and illegal benzodiazepines or other drugs, with or without people's knowledge.

For every overdose that results in death, there are many more nonfatal overdoses, each one with its own emotional and economic toll. OUD and overdose deaths continue to be a major public health concern in the United States, but they are preventable.

People can help reduce the risk of counterfeit pill overdose by only taking pills prescribed to them, being aware that pills bought illegally might contain highly potent drugs and using fentanyl test strips (FTS), small strips of paper that can detect the presence of fentanyl in all different kinds of drugs and drug forms.

CDC facts:

- Overdoses are the leading injury-related cause of death in the United States and appear to have accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In 2022, 107,941 people died from drug overdoses, which equates to 296 overdoses each day.
- Among the 2022 overdose deaths, nearly 76% involved an opioid.
- Research shows that people who have had at least one overdose are more likely to have another.
- In 2022, an estimated 54.6 million Americans needed substance use disorder treatment, but only 13.1 million people with a substance use disorder in the past year received treatment.

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," to educate and update the community regarding prescription

and illicit drug 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.