

Iowa Department of Public Health
Division of Behavioral Health/Bureau of Substance Abuse
Opioid Update for Wednesday, November 14, 2018

The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) offers the Opioid Update to share information about opioid use and Iowa's efforts to address the national opioid epidemic. Please feel free to submit topics to Julie Jones at julie.jones@idph.iowa.gov.

In this issue:

- **Iowa News**
- **Department Efforts**
- **Opioid News**

Iowa News

UnityPoint Health Sponsors Prescription Drug Safety Education Program

UnityPoint Health announced its sponsorship of a national education program for high school students about the dangers of prescription drug misuse, aimed at combating the national opioid epidemic.

UnityPoint Health is the first health system in the U.S. to join the Prescription Drug Safety Network, a nationwide coalition committed to empowering Americans with skills to make safe and healthy decisions about prescription drug use for themselves, their families and their communities. "One hundred and fifteen people die each day from opioid overdose, and it's estimated that 21 million people in the United States have a substance abuse disorder. If we are going to identify a long-term solution to end this epidemic, we must work together," said David Stark, president and chief executive officer of UnityPoint Health – Des Moines. "UnityPoint Health is pleased to partner with Des Moines Public Schools to launch this important program in Iowa."

During the first year of its three-year sponsorship, UnityPoint Health will offer the program to area high schools in Central Iowa, Sioux City, Fort Dodge, Cedar Rapids and the Quad Cities, with plans to expand to more communities over the next two years.

For more information about UnityPoint's Prescription Drug Safety Education Program, please contact Ashley Thompson at ashley.thompson@unitypoint.org.

2019 Iowa Drug Control Strategy

Last week, the Governor's Office of Drug Control Policy (ODCP) released the Drug Policy Advisory Council 2019 Iowa Drug Control Strategy. According to the report, recent developments, several of them encouraging, point to a possible shift in the opioid epidemic, while methamphetamine activity seems to be surging in Iowa.

"Early indications signal a possible slowing of opioid overdose deaths in Iowa, as fewer opioid pain relievers are prescribed and more safeguards against opioid misuse are put into place," said Dale Woolery, Interim Director of the Governor's Office of Drug Control Policy (ODCP). "However, reports of more potent illicit synthetic opioids and increasing meth activity remind us our strategy must be comprehensive, long-term and responsive to evolving challenges."

To read the entire report, please click on the following link: [2019 Drug Control Strategy](#)

Department Efforts

Naloxone Information Available on IDPH's Your Life Iowa Website

IDPH has created an infographic to raise awareness about the availability of naloxone for purchase at pharmacies without a prescription. The infographic – which will soon be available on the department's Your Life Iowa website for download – includes signs and symptoms of an opioid overdose, as well as guidance for contacting 911 for medical services if you suspect an overdose.

To order copies of the infographic, please contact Julie Jones at julie.jones@idph.iowa.gov.

Opioid News

DEA's National Prescription Drug Take Back Day Results

Americans across the country dropped off unused pills reaching a program total of nearly 11 million pounds of unused, unwanted or expired prescription medications. "During the 16th semiannual event on October 27, DEA and federal, state and local partners disposed of more than 900,000 pounds of prescription medications collected at nearly 6,000 sites across the country. Together with almost 5,000 local, state and federal partners, DEA collected and destroyed more than 457 tons of potentially dangerous leftover prescription drugs. This brings the total amount of prescription drugs collected by DEA since the fall of 2010 to 10,878,950 pounds, or 5439.5 tons."

"The results of our most recent Take Back Day clearly demonstrate a need for this initiative as a tool in the fight against America's opioid crisis. The success of this event is a direct reflection of DEA's commitment to prevent drug addiction and overdose deaths in the U.S. Together, we are all helping to make a difference to keep our friends and families safe." – Uttam Dhillon, DEA Acting Administrator.

According to the DEA, Iowa took back over 10,000 pounds of prescription drugs at this year's event. To learn more about the Take Back initiative and specific results, please click on the following link: [Drug Take Back](#)

Register Now for National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism invite prevention and treatment professionals and organizations to participate in National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week® (NDAFW). This week-long observance sheds light on the science behind the effects of drug and alcohol use on the brain, body, and behavior, and connects students with scientists and other experts who help shatter the myths about drugs and alcohol.

It's easy to get involved! Find activity ideas, then register your event online to be featured on the official 2019 NDAFW map. NIDA staff can also help support your event planning efforts, including ordering free science-based materials to complement your event. They can also help you connect with organizations to make your event even more successful.

For assistance with planning your activity or ordering materials, please contact Brian Marquis at NIDA at drugfacts@nida.nih.gov.