

Iowa Department of Public Health
Division of Behavioral Health/Bureau of Substance Abuse
Opioid Update: August 2022

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 the State Opioid Response helpdesk at sor@idph.iowa.gov.

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Iowa News

The Truth About Counterfeit Pills

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), overdose deaths linked to synthetic opioids, like fentanyl, tripled in the past two years, yet 73 percent of teens were not aware that fake prescription pills could be made with fentanyl.

A statewide media campaign developed through the Strategic Prevention Framework for Prescription Drugs (SPF Rx) grant funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) was created to address counterfeit drug dangers in Iowa. The campaign titled "Fake Drugs" focuses on youth ages 12-25. It is designed to educate youth about the dangers of counterfeit prescription drugs and the potential consequences of taking someone else's prescription drugs.

Media campaign materials include banner ads, posters, and social media ads all in English and Spanish. They are available for download at the YourLifelowa.org Media Center. Additionally, a one-page fact sheet to educate stakeholders and community members about the dangers of counterfeit drugs is available at the Media Center.

For more information, contact SPF Rx project director, Janet.Nelson@idph.iowa.gov.

For information on SPF Rx, please click on this link: [IDPH](#)

To access the media campaign, please click on this link: [YLI](#)

Governor Reynolds Makes Statement on Fentanyl and Fake Pills

Governor Reynolds has called attention to the growing fentanyl and counterfeit pill issue facing our state. Governor Reynolds warns that Fentanyl is here in Iowa, not only in major metro areas, but also in our small towns. The article also addresses fake pills and their increasing availability in Iowa's illegal drug trade. The pills look like legitimate prescription pills but may contain lethal amounts of fentanyl. According to the DEA, 4 out of every 10 fake pills laced with fentanyl contain a lethal amount of the drug.

To read the full article, click here: [GOV](#)

Attorney General Miller Recommends Legislation to Prevent Fentanyl Overdoses

Attorney General Miller has called on legislators to pass bills to prevent fentanyl-related deaths. “We know that many of the overdose deaths are accidental, often because people are unaware they’ve ingested a dose of fentanyl,” Miller said. “We have tools available that could reduce these deaths, but we must first change Iowa’s laws.” Miller specifically identifies legalizing the use of fentanyl test strips and increasing access to naloxone through secondary distribution as efforts to be considered.

To read the full article, click here: [AG](#)

Opioid News

Substance Use Disorders and Racial and Ethnic Disparities

Researchers highlight racial and ethnic disparities in SUD treatment access and outcomes in the United States. The mounting evidence of disparity includes overdose rates rising faster among people of color than among white people and people of color using medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD) at lower rates than white people. The researchers are using this data as a call for policy change to increase health equity initiatives in both SUD prevention and treatment. Five steps are suggested in this article to help decrease racial and ethnic disparities in SUD services.

To read the article, please click on this link: [NEJM](#)

To listen to a podcast on the topic, please click on this link: [NIDA](#)

Estimating Naloxone Needs in the United States

There is a call for greater naloxone distribution throughout the United States to combat the overdose crisis driven by fentanyl, prescription opioids, and heroin. Following a literature review and interviews of a panel of subject matter experts, it was concluded that 1,270 two-dose naloxone kits would need to be made available per 100,000 people to reach the target of naloxone use in 80% of witnessed overdoses.

To read the full article, please click on this link: [LPH](#)

Resources

Trainings to Promote the Importance of Naloxone

The CDC has released fact sheets, trainings, and other resources to promote the importance of naloxone. Research shows that increasing naloxone access and awareness in our communities can help save lives.

Find Naloxone Fact Sheets on opioids here: [CDC Fact Sheets](#)

Access the full suite of resources by following this link: [CDC](#)

Spanish Language Fentanyl Resources Available

The CDC has released a Spanish language toolkit on naloxone and fentanyl.

Find these resources in Spanish here: [CDC Spanish Resources](#)

Addiction Medicine Checklist

The CDC has developed an Addiction Medicine Toolkit. It is endorsed by the American Society of Addiction Medicine, to promote collaboration with addiction medicine specialists to support effective patient treatment.

Find the toolkit by following this link: [CDC](#)