

Ohio's Progress in the Fight Against Prescription Drug Abuse

Governor John R. Kasich has implemented aggressive and comprehensive approaches to fight not only opiate drug addiction and overdoses, but also includes a continued evolving focus on preventing prescription drug abuse. These reforms to fight this growing epidemic include:

Stepping up law enforcement drug interdiction efforts

- Increasing the penalties for trafficking fentanyl.
- Improving access to addiction treatment.
- Expanding prescribers' use of Ohio's opioid prescribing guidelines and the prescription drug monitoring program, the Ohio Automated Rx Reporting System (OARRS).
- Expanding and recognizing the number of schools that have implemented the *Start Talking!* youth drug prevention initiative, or a similar initiative.
- Increasing the awareness and availability of naloxone to reverse opiate overdoses and save lives.
- Continued work with communities to enhance local efforts through the *Health Resources Toolkit for Addressing Opioid Abuse*.

Creating Pathways to Responsible Opiate Addiction Treatment and Recovery The Governor's Opiate MidBiennium Review legislation (Senate Bill 319) make it easier under Ohio regulations to establish opiate treatment programs through the. The expansion of Addiction Treatment Program through the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services that is available through certified drug courts and with planned expansion in FY 17 to an additional seven counties that have experienced high numbers of overdose deaths. The Ohio Department of Health will develop and distribute a toolkit that hospital emergency departments can use to assist drug overdose patients with treatment options and other community resources. The increased support of communities in developing Opioid Regional Alliances and implementing local strategies to address overdose deaths and addiction— such as those contained in the *Governor's Cabinet Opiate Action Team toolkit*. Ohio has also experienced enhanced access to state-level rapid response assistance to spikes in local overdoses. Opioid treatment programs will be able to bill Medicaid for buprenorphine administration beginning in January of 2017, enhancing their ability to provide medication assisted treatment.

Preventing Drug Use Before It Starts Focus on increasing the number of parents, grandparents, teachers and community leaders signed up for *Start Talking!* This prevention initiative emails tips to help encourage frequent on-going conversations with Ohio's youth about the dangers associated with substance abuse. Prevention is growing as evidenced by the publicly highlighted high-quality drug abuse prevention initiatives in school settings around the state. Ohio has seen the expansion of promoting drug takeback opportunities to encourage the safe disposal of unused or expired prescription medications. The Ohio Department of Health has taken the lead with the development and implementation of a public awareness campaign to educate consumers about appropriate opioid prescribing by their healthcare provider to help ensure their safety.

Saving lives by Expanding Access to Overdose Antidote Naloxone A recent Ohio law (House Bill 4) permits the dispensing of naloxone without a prescription by a pharmacist. Today, Ohio has more than 900 participating pharmacies in 79 counties across Ohio. Ohio is focusing on improving naloxone reimbursement policies for Medicaid managed-care plans to promote use of the life-saving drug.

Encouraging Appropriate Use and Availability of Pain Medication The Ohio Automated Rx Reporting System has been expanded to integrate into the electronic medical records and pharmacy dispensing systems. The State of Ohio Board of Pharmacy will explore providing access to the Ohio Automated Rx Reporting System for certified drug courts in Ohio. Referrals continue to be provided from the State of Ohio Board of Pharmacy to regulatory boards regarding clinicians who may be in violation of Ohio law for prescribing opioids and/or benzodiazepines without an Ohio Automated Rx Reporting System check. Physicians now receive embedded educational information about opioid prescribing as part of the new/renewal licensure process. Develop an Ohio Automated Rx Reporting System (OARRS) training website for higher education and residency programs to simulate use of the system for future prescribers and pharmacists. Work with stakeholders to develop and test standard algorithms to identify patients exhibiting at-risk behavior for an overdose. Use algorithms to develop proactive alerts for prescribers in the Ohio Automated Rx Reporting System. Develop a report in the Ohio Automated Rx Reporting System to allow prescribers to view their prescribing habits compared with their peers.

Cracking Down on Drug Trafficking The continued implementation of Ohio's statewide strategic plan to integrate with local law enforcement, state and federal partners, and the Ohio National Guard to disrupt and reduce the supply line of illicit drugs, and enhance treatment and prevention efforts. Year-to-date in 2016, the Ohio State Highway Patrol has seized nearly triple the amount of heroin seized in all of 2015.

For information on behavioral health counseling to address the impact of substance abuse and dependency on you, your children, or someone close to you, contact the Mental Health and Recovery Board at 740-695-9998. Services are available in Belmont, Harrison and Monroe Counties and in several area school districts.