

Feb. 21, 2018

>>> ODH Issues Advisory on Continuing Increase in Fentanyl-Related Overdose Deaths Involving Non-Opioids

The Ohio Department of Health issued the following advisory today concerning the continuing increase of fentanyl-related overdose deaths involving non-opioids such as cocaine and methamphetamines/other psychostimulants, urging first responders to administer naloxone for drug overdoses even when non-opioids are indicated.

- Preliminary 2017 data shows a continuing increase in fentanyl-related drug overdose deaths, including an increase in overdose deaths involving both cocaine and fentanyl, as well as methamphetamines/other psychostimulants and fentanyl.
- Preliminary 2017 data indicates that 71 percent of all unintentional drug overdose deaths involved fentanyl or a fentanyl analogue. By comparison, 58 percent of overdose deaths did so in 2016, 37.9 percent in 2015, 19.9 percent in 2014, and 4 percent in 2013.
- When the Ohio Department of Health released the [2016 Ohio Drug Overdose Report](#) in August 2017, the report noted an increase in cocaine-related overdose deaths, 55.8 percent of which also involved fentanyl or an analogue.
- Preliminary 2017 data indicates that in 22 percent (850) of all overdose deaths, cocaine and fentanyl or its analogues were both mentioned on the death certificate, compared to 15 percent (619) in 2016 and 8 percent (239) in 2015. Additionally, overdose deaths in which both fentanyl and methamphetamines/other psychostimulants were mentioned on the death certificate increased 142 percent from 2016 (117) to 2017 (283).
- People who use illicit drugs and who are not familiar with the risks, such as those who use cocaine occasionally, are at exceptionally high risk of an overdose when using cocaine mixed with fentanyl.
- Fentanyl is a schedule II synthetic painkiller approved for treating severe pain, typically advanced cancer pain. It is 30 to 50 times more potent than heroin. However, most cases of fentanyl-related harm, overdose, and death in the U.S. are linked to illegally manufactured fentanyl. Fentanyl is often mixed with heroin and/or cocaine as a combination product— with or without the user’s knowledge—to increase its euphoric effects.

Recommendations

Because of the increase in overdose deaths involving cocaine and fentanyl, and methamphetamines and fentanyl, ODH is making several recommendations to first-responders, healthcare providers, substance abuse treatment professionals, community-based Project DAWN (Deaths Avoided With Naloxone) programs, and others who interact with people who use illicit drugs.

- **Administer Naloxone in Drug Overdoses When Non-Opioids are Suspected/Indicated**
Even though naloxone is *not* effective in treating drug overdoses caused solely by stimulants such as cocaine and methamphetamines, the administration of naloxone may be helpful in drug overdoses caused by a combination of stimulants and opioids like fentanyl and its analogues.
- **Help Educate Individuals About Dangers of Illicit Drugs Potentially Mixed With Fentanyl**
Educate patients/clients who use illicit substances about the dangers of illicit drugs like cocaine and methamphetamines being mixed with fentanyl and the increased risk of overdose and death. Key points to emphasize include:
 - Fentanyl is often mixed with other drugs without the user’s knowledge.
 - Fentanyl is more likely to be fatal due to its high potency and how long it stays in the body.
 - Avoid mixing drugs (including alcohol) which increases the risk of overdose.
 - Do not use drugs while alone so that someone else can help/get help for them if they overdose.
 - Make sure that the drug user, their family and friends all have been trained on the signs and symptoms of a drug overdose, where to get naloxone and how to administer it, how to do rescue breathing, and the importance of calling 911 immediately even when naloxone is administered.
 - Do not leave the ambulance or hospital against medical advice after naloxone has been administered to reverse the overdose. The naloxone **may** wear off before the opioids wear off – and you **could** go into overdose again.
- **Help Individuals Get Access to Naloxone**
Encourage patients/clients who use illicit drugs, as well as their family and friends, to carry naloxone. Refer them to a local Project DAWN community-based naloxone education and distribution program, or refer them to a local pharmacy that dispenses naloxone. More information about where to obtain naloxone is available at <http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhprograms/naloxone/stopoverdoses.aspx>.
- **Referral to Substance Abuse Treatment**
Refer patients/clients who use illicit drugs to treatment. You can direct them to treatment and recovery resources on the “Take Charge Ohio” website (<http://www.takechargeohio.org/Toolkits/Patients>).
- **Clinical Information About Fentanyl**
Fentanyl is an opioid analgesic. The biological effects of fentanyl are indistinguishable from those of heroin. Treatment is the same as for other opioid overdose, however, larger than usual doses of naloxone (2-10mg) and/or multiple administrations of naloxone might be required for reversal of the opioid effects. Fentanyl is not detected by standard urine opioid immunoassays; therefore, opioid exposure should not be ruled out based on toxicology screen results. Consult your laboratory for preferred testing methods. Symptoms of overdose are characteristic of central nervous system depression: lethargy, respiratory depression, pinpoint pupils, change in consciousness, seizure and/or coma.

>>> Columbus News Station to Host Your Voice, Your Future Townhall on Opioids – Feb. 22

WSYX-TV 6 in Columbus will be hosting a live “Fighting Back: Opioids in Ohio” town hall Thursday from 7-8 p.m. The event will be simulcast on Sinclair Broadcast Group stations throughout Ohio including WKEF (Dayton), WKRC (Cincinnati), WNWO (Toledo) and WTOV (Steubenville). Watch [online](#) or check your local station listings. The panel discussion will include OhioMHAS Director Tracy Plouck, U.S.

Attorney Ben Glassman, Andrew Keller of Slingshot Solutions, Merissa McKinstry of Dublin Springs East Hospital and Joey Moats, Ohioan in recovery.

>>> Coalitions Rising: Policies & Practices for Better Prevention – March 19-20

Prevention Action Alliance will host [Coalitions Rising: Policies & Practices for Better Prevention](#) March 19-20 at the Marriott Columbus University Area. Click the link for more details and to register.

>>> Ohio Recovery Housing Training Opportunities: Fifth Annual Conference, Policies/Procedures Webinar

Ohio Recovery Housing (ORH) will host its [Fifth Annual Conference “Time to Build: Strategies on Expansion, Sustainability and Advocacy”](#) April 3-4 at the Marriott University Area Columbus. Cost is \$185 for ORH Associates and \$220 for non-members. Click [HERE](#) to register and [HERE](#) for hotel information.



ORH will also host a “Writing quality policies and procedures that improve operations and resident experience” webinar on March 6 from 10 a.m. – noon. Participants will gain knowledge and skills needed to write effective policies and procedures. Click [HERE](#) to register for the March 6 webinar.

In the News

2.21.18 | *The Suburbanite* [Lake High School partners on ‘Be Present’ assembly](#)

2.21.18 | *The Suburbanite* [Lake Local Schools implements mental health training](#)

2.21.18 | *Dayton Daily News* [Her love of helping people leads to work with addicts, families](#)

2.21.18 | *Youngstown Vindicator (Editorial)* [Enlist in war on opiates; attend drug summit today](#)

2.20.18 | *Newark Advocate* [LMH CEO: Healthcare industry played a part in opioid crisis](#)

2.20.18 | *MedicalXpress* [Stuck in an opioid crisis, officials turn to acupuncture](#)

2.19.18 | *Youngstown Vindicator* [Prescription-overdose prevention program focuses on children, medical community](#)

2.19.18 | *OSU Lantern* [USG passes resolution to put naloxone in residence halls](#)

2.19.18 | *Toledo Blade* [Quick Response Team aims to fill void for overdose survivors](#)

2.18.18 | *Canton Repository* [Accidental overdose or suicide? Coroner rulings complicated](#)

2.17.18 | *Chillicothe Gazette* [Panel: Churches should unite forces to combat opiate epidemic](#)

2.17.18 | *Toledo Blade* [Access to synthetic opioids keeps overdose number climbing](#)

2.16.18 | *Columbus Dispatch* [Work requirements would affect 1 in 20 Ohio Medicaid recipients](#)

2.16.18 | *WSYX-TV* [Teen depression: What you can do to spot the signs and to get help](#)

Please share widely and encourage your colleagues to subscribe to *OhioMHAS eNews* on our [website](#). Also, be sure to join us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) and [Flickr](#)!