

**CENTER FOR  
HEALTH  
LEADERSHIP &  
PRACTICE**

A Center of the  
Public Health Institute



# Preventing Overdose Deaths-

## Strategies utilized by California local opioid coalitions

### Prevent new addictions

- Increase support for and participation in local coalitions
- Upstream prevention and education
- Safer prescribing practices
- Drug disposal and takeback

### Manage chronic pain safely

- Alternative pain therapies
- Tapering high dosages
- Limiting opioids + sedatives

### Treat addiction

- **Motivating** people to get into treatment (court systems and community campaigns)
- **Increase access** to medications for addiction treatment (MAT) including in jails, Emergency Departments, EMT systems, etc
- **Stigma reduction**- educate community influencers that addiction is a disease and treatment works

### Stop overdose deaths

- **Naloxone** training and distribution (libraries, police, fire, schools, public programs...)
- **Provide** Fentanyl test strips broadly (Feds already allow)
- **Syringe services programs** can be critical tools for preventing spread of infections such as Hepatitis and HIV, but also creating connections & trust so more people suffering with SUD (addiction) get into treatment
- **Overdose prevention centers** – provide safe places for trusting relationships to develop, reduce risks of opioid use and potentially get connected into treatment
- **Scale** projects that are currently successful pilot programs



# Specific Strategies by county

## Contra Costa County MEDS Coalition:

- 'Life's Too Good To Be Wasted' youth substance use awareness campaign was launched.
- Established a new 'Give Life a Chance' program to engage law enforcement agencies to leave behind Narcan.

## Drug Safe Solano:

- Provided training, education, and support to our coalition members that was based on a more inclusive, trauma informed approach.

## East Bay Safe Prescribing:

- Trained 52 people in law enforcement from all over California on their role in combatting the opioid epidemic through topics such as stigma, harm reduction, and resources for use in their agency.
- Provided a Mental Health First Aid overview to 25 people representing law enforcement, medical providers, and schools/colleges/universities.

## El Dorado County Opioid Coalition:

- Launched new overdose prevention pilot programs to support the community such as vending machines and OD maps.



# Specific Strategies by county, cont.

Santa Cruz County (HRCSCC) and Homeless Persons Health Project (HPHP).

Safe Rx Mendocino: Opioid Safety Coalition:

Addiction Anti-Stigma media campaign has reached over 15,000 Mendocino County residents increasing allies and partners in addressing the opioid crisis.

SafeRx Santa Cruz Coalition:

Launch of low barrier MAT services August 1st through a partnership between Harm Reduction Coalition

Inland Empire Opioid Crisis Coalition (IEOCC):

Increased leadership of community-based organizations, to achieve the strategic goal of more engagement and outreach for prevention, in addition to the health care industry efforts that are ongoing.



# 1- Bring Federal state, county, local policy into alignment

---

## Testing

- Need Fentanyl testing in hospitals where overdose is suspected
- Need access to Fent testing strips (FTS) as a harm reduction practice in a broad variety of settings (FTS distribution is promoted federally but currently some local local jurisdictions regard FTS as drug paraphernalia although new CA law is moving through legislature to declassify as paraphenalia)

## Reporting

- Consistent data reporting across Justice, healthcare, public health sectors would help to pinpoint outbreak risk and institute preventive measures (ODMAP from DOJ is one tool for linking data across sectors to reduce overdose deaths). Many states have implemented (ODMAP HIDTA-DEA) and a number of California counties are in process of implementing.

## Jail standards

- Treatment availability, warm-handoff discharge from custody of individuals with SUD, behavioral services access are inconsistent across jurisdictions



## 2- Act effectively within a mixed drug environment

---

Understand that risk is differentially distributed – communities do not share the same risks for specific drugs and the social communities at highest risk are different from community to community

Fentanyl contaminates most drugs these days

Fent more lethal for naïve drug users

>50% overdose related deaths in CA implicate meth

Be ready for change – the drug environment changes quickly



# 3- Build lasting infrastructure

---

## Treatment

- Build broader participation of all potential actors (EMS, Emergency departments, mobile van clinics, primary care providers...)

## Prevention

- Institute harm reduction sites, increase education partners (churches, business leaders, cultural leaders)

## Coalitions

- Organized community voice can accelerate adoption of locally relevant policies and practices
- Support understanding of at-risk groups
- Build greater trust and buy-in from vulnerable groups



# californiaopioidsafetynetwork.org



Materials developed with support of California Department of Public Health- all rights reserved

**CENTER FOR  
HEALTH  
LEADERSHIP &  
PRACTICE**

A Center of the  
Public Health Institute

