

# Cuyahoga County Opiate Task Force Report 2016



# CUYAHOGA COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH



## Historic Year for Northeast Ohio

Cuyahoga County is considered home to nearly 1.3 million people along the shores of Lake Erie.

A rustbelt community often plagued by stories of burning rivers, poverty, and cursed sports teams.

However, 2016 seemed to be the exception. Cleveland was thriving under an economic and development boom and was making preparations to host the Republican National Convention.

The RNC put Cleveland on the global stage during the summer of 2016. The event in which delegates of the United States Republican Party chose the party's nominees for President and Vice President of the United States, was held July 18-21, 2016, at Quicken Loans Arena. Billionaire, real estate tycoon, and reality TV star, Donald Trump was named the Republican Presidential nominee during the convention. His acceptance speech was the longest in recent history at nearly 75 minutes.

Just prior to the convention, Cleveland sports fans got to erase decades of sporting heartache and two word reminders of: The Drive, The Shot, The Fumble, and even The Decision.

Lebron James led the Cleveland Cavaliers to a historic win by overcoming a 3-1 deficit to beat the Golden State Warriors in an intense seven game NBA Finals on June 19, 2016, making them the first team in NBA history to accomplish this feat. Just days later, a parade was held to honor the city's first major sports title in 52 years. A record breaking crowd of over one million people came out to celebrate the victory.

The Cleveland Indians also brought lots of excitement to the city when they reached the 2016 World Series and held a 3-1 lead against the Chicago Cubs. They ultimately lost the series but it was safe to say, Cleveland was no longer a cursed sports town.



Despite the positive momentum and national attention that Cleveland had gained, not all news was positive. Cuyahoga County was also breaking records for accidental drug overdose.

Per the Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office (CCMEO), an average of 12 people per week lost their lives to drug overdose. This resulted to over 500 victims in 2016. This number more than doubles the fatalities for 2015.

To put this burden into perspective, the CCMEO came up with a great, yet tragic analogy. Annually, the number of individuals in Cuyahoga County who misuse or abuse prescription opioids would fill First Energy Stadium (73,200). From those individuals, if you took a portion of them and filled Quicken Loans Arena, this is the number of individuals every year who make the switch to heroin (20,562). Last, if you filled and crashed a 747 commercial jet airliner, this is approximately the number of people who die on an annual basis in Cuyahoga County as a result of this epidemic (over 350).

2010

Enough opioids were prescribed to medicate every American adult around the clock for a month.

2011

Nearly five Ohioans died each day to a drug overdose

2013 & 2014

Cuyahoga County lost 340 residents to opioids in 2013, increasing to 352 deaths in 2014.



## Overview of Local Drug Related Deaths

- The United States consumes nearly 80% of the world's total opioid supply, even though it makes up only 5% of the world's population.
- About 75% of all prescription drug overdose deaths can be attributed to opioid pain relievers.
- The leading cause of injury-related death in Ohio continues to be accidental drug overdose.
- Ohio has experienced nearly an 800% increase in fatalities since 2000.
- Heroin and fentanyl are at the forefront of this epidemic.

### Definitions:

**Opiate** - originate from naturally-occurring elements found in the opium poppy plant. These drugs are best known for their ability to relieve pain symptoms. Opiate drug types include heroin, opium, morphine and codeine.

**Opioid** - any chemical that resembles morphine and is also used to treat pain. They can be naturally occurring or man-made. Examples include oxycodone (OxyContin), fentanyl, methadone, hydrocodone (Vicodin).

**Fentanyl** - a powerful opiate that is 30-50 times more potent than heroin. It is typically used during anesthesia or to treat patients with severe pain. However, recent overdoses have been connected to illegally-produced and trafficked fentanyl, not diverted pharmaceutical-grade fentanyl.

**Carfentanil** - a synthetic opioid that is 100 times more potent than fentanyl and up to 10,000 times more potent than morphine. It has been mixed with heroin, causing an increase in the number of overdoses. There are no known medicinal purposes for humans. It is typically used to sedate large animals, such as elephants.

**Naloxone** - Naloxone (also known as Narcan) is a medication that can reverse an overdose caused by an opioid drug. When administered during an overdose, naloxone blocks the effects of opioids on the brain and quickly restores breathing. Naloxone has no potential for abuse.

### How Did This Happen?

There are several contributing factors that led to this epidemic.

- Changes made to clinic pain management guidelines during the late 1990's
- Marketing medications directly to the consumer
- Over-prescribing of high potency pain medication
- HCAHPS/Press Ganey Scores (patient satisfaction surveys) that affected hospital reimbursement
- Abuse-deterrent formulations of medications that may have inadvertently shifted abuse towards heroin
- Mass incarceration for non-violent, drug-related crimes
- Lack of treatment availability
- Stigma; viewing drug addiction as a moral failing

2015

Number of deaths from heroin and prescription drugs decreases, but deaths from fentanyl are on the rise. The statewide daily average increases to approximately 8 deaths per day.

2016

Fatalities from accidental drug overdose are two times higher than the 2015 total. Carfentanil emerges as a serious threat

## What is being done?

### Cuyahoga County Opiate Task Force

The Cuyahoga County Opiate Task Force was formed in 2010 to find solutions to the increasing number of accidental drug-related deaths.

**Membership and Structure** - The Cuyahoga County Opiate Task Force (CCOTF) is comprised of nearly 200 individuals across 65 organizations. Members include concerned citizens, drug treatment and recovery, education, health care, individuals in recovery, law enforcement, medicine, mental health services, pharmacists, prevention specialists, and public health officials. These diverse partners collaborate at the local, state, and national level to implement prevention strategies that will have a positive impact on reducing drug abuse and death. Under the leadership of the Cuyahoga County Board of Health (CCBH), the task force and its sub-committees meet on a bi-monthly basis.

**Accomplishments** - Since its inception, membership of the CCOTF has grown tremendously and the accomplishments have been numerous. Collaboration has been the key to success. Below are select highlights of partner organizations throughout 2016.



### Mission:

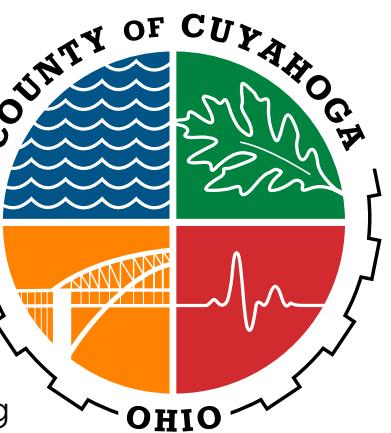
To serve the residents of Cuyahoga County by actively working to raise public awareness, promote community action, and provide education related to the dangers and devastating effects of drug abuse.

### Vision:

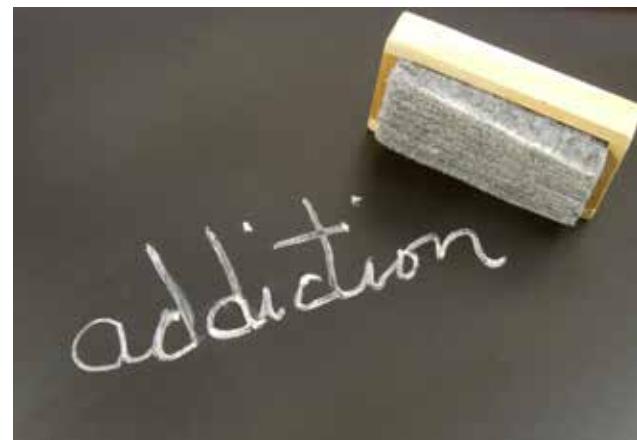
To create a healthier community by reducing accidental fatalities associated with opiate abuse through collaborative partnerships that focus on prevention, treatment, and recovery.

- **Alcohol Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board** - Convened an Addiction Recovery Advocacy Group comprised of nearly 200 family members who have lost a loved one to addiction, individuals in recovery and professionals who want to prevent this tragedy from happening to another family. The ADAMHS Board is implementing ideas for change from this group into its three year strategic plan, including using social media to educate and engage with youth, increasing community awareness of free Project DAWN sites and incorporating language that celebrates recovery into the community.
  - Contracted with an individual who has been in recovery from heroin addiction for 13 years to develop and provide training to the medical, business and faith-based community a better understanding of the connection between abuse of prescription medication and heroin addiction, improve the way opioids are prescribed by doctors/hospitals as a way to reduce heroin/opiate addiction and give an overview of heroin/opioid/fentanyl overdose risks and rates in Cuyahoga County.
  - Launched a three month Heroin/Fentanyl Prevention Awareness Campaign using internet and terrestrial radio messages combined with comprehensive outdoor advertising on billboards, RTA busses and neighborhood kiosks, in addition to targeted social media. The campaign targets at-risk populations identified by the Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office.
  - Provided 20 heroin/addiction presentations to community groups including medical professionals, faith-based, professional and education organizations. The presentations stressed that mental illness and addiction are brain diseases and that treatment works and people recover. The presentations also provided information about the epidemic and treatment and recovery services funded by the Board.
- **Big Elephant** - collaborated with Nancy Lowrie & Associates to present educational sessions at the Strongsville United Church of Christ. They focused on breaking the silence of the epidemic by providing messages of hope both for addicts and families. Sessions on community action featured Vince Caraffi, chair of the CCOTF, as well as Police Chief Vanyo of Olmsted Township and Police Chief Grecol of Berea speaking about the Police Assisted Addiction and Recovery Initiative (PAARI).
- **Community Awareness and Prevention Association (CAPA)** - continued to provide prevention messaging through innovative programming at both the middle and high school levels. CAPA's Kelly Lazar spearheads the "We are the Majority" Youth Rally, featuring over 400 drug and substance free youth. CAPA also hosts bi-annual drug take back days, collecting several hundred pounds of unwanted and expired medication.
- **Circle Health Services (formerly The Free Medical Clinic of Greater Cleveland)** - continued to operate the first, and currently one of only few, licensed Syringe Exchange Programs in the State of Ohio. The program currently exchanges more than 495,000 needles annually through its clinic location and two mobile sites in the city of Cleveland.
- **Cleveland Department of Public Health (CDPH)** - The CDPH Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health has facilitated a Project DAWN walk-in clinic since July 2015. To date, 188 naloxone kits have been distributed. The clinic is promoted through continuing advocacy with the criminal justice system (judicial, probationary, law enforcement, drug courts) as well as the social services departments at local hospitals including Fairview, Hillcrest, Lakewood, Lutheran, Southwest General, and the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Health Center.
- **Cleveland EMS** - began distributing Project DAWN kits through city of Cleveland ambulances 24/7 and EMS Headquarters. More than 100 kits were distributed to the public since the program began late 2016.

- **Cover2Resources** -formally launched in March 2016. Cover2Resources introduced the PPT Podcast series—People, Places, and Things making a difference in the opioid epidemic. Founder Greg McNeil continues to interview politicians, therapists, grassroots organizers, and individuals in recovery. Cover2 Resources published over 50 podcast episodes in its first year. They hosted a Quick Response Team workshop in Northeast Ohio that was attended by fire and police in 15 communities. This workshop offered guidance for communities on how to build a Quick Response Team. These teams are composed of a social worker, a police officer, and an EMS professional who knock on doors three days after an overdose to help people overcome substance use disorder. Cover2 Resources also produced videos and a podcast to promote Drug Free Clubs of America in Northeast Ohio. This effort introduced Drug Free Clubs to new audiences and helped to establish good will within the community.
- **Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas** - received **Addiction Treatment Program (ATP)** funding from the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services to assist in medication-assisted treatment. These funds targeted both Judge David Matia's and Judge Joan Synenberg's Drug Court Dockets.
  - The Court of Common Pleas and the ADAMHS Board each contributed \$100,000 to support access to Vivitrol in the community. The combined \$200,000 was awarded to Salvation Army – Harbor Light to for a pilot program. Salvation Army – Harbor Light now has the capacity to provide Vivitrol for any client obtaining behavioral health treatment through a treatment program funded by the ADAMHS Board.
  - The Court - Corrections Planning Board coordinates the **Cuyahoga County Council on Medication Assisted Treatment** to provide a forum for discussion among those referring to, providing or planning to provide MAT.
  - The Court of Common Pleas received a new Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHSA) grant to provide an additional full docket specifically targeting 45 opioid-abusing clients in each of the next three years. The new grant provides funding for both substance abuse behavioral health treatment as well as medication-assisted treatment.
- **Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office (CCMEO)** - is a Regional Crime Lab re-accredited by ASCLD-LAB. They continued to provide timely death data regarding drug overdoses in Cuyahoga County that helped steer prevention efforts. The CCMEO also created a new 3-Day Death Investigation Course for justice and law enforcement officials which was recognized as the winner of the 2016 August Vollmer Excellence in Forensic Science Award.
- **Cuyahoga County Sheriff's Department** - provided over 42 municipalities across Cuyahoga County with Drug Drop Boxes. They destroyed over 10,000 pounds of unwanted and/or expired medication in 2016.
- **Discount Drug Mart (DDM)** - Collaborated with CCBH and MetroHealth to create a protocol to begin distributing naloxone at every Discount Drug Mart throughout Ohio. All pharmacists received addiction education and were trained on how to provide naloxone to community members. A pain medication awareness pamphlet was created to educate customers filling opioid prescriptions at DDM.



- **Dr. Steven Sroka** - continued his inspiring message of The Power of One,The Power of Many. In 2015, Dr. Sroka suffered cardiac arrest while providing education to staff at Medina High School. Thankfully, he was revived with the use of an AED. Dr. Sroka was able to return to Medina to finish his presentation in 2016. In an ironic way, heroin saved his life.
- **Drug Awareness & Prevention** - held a fundraising event for prevention education in which funds raised were used to bring K-12 education to two schools. Guest speakers included Ohio Representative Nicki Antonio, Rocky River Mayor Pamela Bobst, and WEB Drug Task Force Special Agent in Charge, Jeff Capretto.
- **HUGS Foundation** - hosted a benefit that raised over \$10,000, using these funds and their prevention messaging to help over 300 families.
- **Orca House** - received its second consecutive three-year accreditation from the Commission on the Certification of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). The accreditation runs thru October 2018 and is for all ORCA House treatment services. ORCA's treatment completion rates continue to meet national standards of 60% for residential treatment and 50% for outpatient treatment.
- **Robby's Voice** - created a family group called Family Matters with the mindset that as addiction is a family disease, treating the family is the foundation for recovery. They continued their prevention messaging at numerous schools and community forums, testified before Homeland Security to give them a better understanding of ongoing community efforts to combat addiction, and worked with school counselors to explore educational programs suitable for grades K-6.
- **The Siegal Lifelong Learning Program at Case Western Reserve University** - presented a four-part series: "Substance Abuse:The Importance of Saving Lives". 137 people attended these sessions featuring 11 different speakers covering many areas of interest including the history of addiction, pregnancy and childbirth, help in the community, and stories of success.
- **Social Advocates for Youth (SAY)** - Hosted a roundtable viewing and discussion of Chasing the Dragon for both students and parents, took students to observe Recovery Court where they had the opportunity to interact with Judge Synenberg, presiding Judge of the Recovery Court, and provided prevention education to nearly 700 students.
- **St. Vincent Charity Medical Center, Rosary Hall** - Hosted U.S. Surgeon General Vivek H. Murthy July 12, 2016 as part of his national "Turn the Tide" campaign, held an opiate conference on September 29 with 140 people in attendance, provided Project DAWN training for staff and distributed 35 naloxone kits to employees of the hospital, and continued to work with local media to spotlight the epidemic and treatment options available.
- **Westshore Enforcement Bureau (WEB)** - The WEB Narcotics Task Force which represents the six western suburbs of Bay Village, Fairview Park, Lakewood, North Olmsted, Rocky River and Westlake has reported 74 naloxone saves thru early December with projected numbers to be close to 80.
- **The Woodrow Project** - continued to successfully operate Level 2 recovery housing for eight women since 2014. In November, a Level 1 home was opened for women on the west side of Cleveland that is full with six women. In conjunction with the Cuyahoga County ADAMHS Board, a third home is set to open that will serve five more women by early 2017.



## The United States Attorney's Heroin and Opioid Task Force

The U.S. Attorney's Heroin and Opioid Task Force was established in 2013 to address the region's expanding opioid epidemic. The group brings together a diverse group of stakeholders, including law enforcement, the medical community, people in recovery, treatment professionals, judges, public health professionals, educators and others. It focuses on solutions from four perspectives: law enforcement; education and prevention; healthcare policy; and treatment.

Members of the Task Force include the Cleveland Clinic, the Cuyahoga County Sheriff's Department, MetroHealth Medical Center, Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court, the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office, the Ohio Attorney General, Orca House, WKYC Channel 3, the Cleveland Division of Police, the DEA, the FBI, the Ohio State Medical Board, the Ohio State Pharmacy Board, the Cuyahoga County Board of Health, the Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner, University Hospitals, the ADAMHS Board and others.

While the goals of the Heroin and Opioid Action Task Force are aligned with the goals of the Cuyahoga County Opiate Task Force, and while several members participate in both groups, they are separate committees. The Heroin and Opioid Action Task Force is led by the U.S. Department of Justice. Efforts are put forth not only in Cuyahoga County, but stretch to our nation's leaders and decision makers across the state and into Washington, D.C.

Successes to which members of the group have contributed include: working to make naloxone more readily available; presentations to tens of thousands of parents, students and other members of the community at hundreds of town hall meetings and schools; increased training for doctors and other medical professionals about the dangers of opioids; the creation of a heroin-involved death investigation team that treats overdoses as crime scenes, with the goal of filing enhanced criminal charges for dealers when appropriate; and working to increase the availability of drug treatment, among others.



## The Attorney General's Award for Outstanding Contributions to Community Partnerships for Public Safety

This award recognizes outstanding achievement in the development and support of community partnerships designed to address public safety within a community as well as significant contributions of citizens and organizations that have assisted the department in the accomplishment of these programs. The Heroin and Opioid Task Force was honored as the recipient of the 64<sup>th</sup> Attorney General's Award for Outstanding Contributions to Community Partnerships for Public Safety. This is the most prestigious award within the Department of Justice. Below is a list of all award recipients.



Philip Angelo-Special Assistant, Cuyahoga County Sheriff's Department  
Vince Caraffi-Supervisor, Cuyahoga County Board of Health  
Todd DeKatch-Supervisory Special Agent, Cleveland Resident Office, FBI  
Thomas Gilson, MD-Medical Examiner  
Gary Gingell-Commander, Cleveland Division of Police  
Jason Jerry, MD-Addiction Psychiatrist, The Cleveland Clinic  
Aaron Marks-Board Chair, Associate Board, Recovery Resources  
Keith Martin-Resident Agent in Charge, Drug Enforcement Administration  
David Matia-Judge, Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas  
Joan Papp, MD-Emergency Response Physician, MetroHealth Medical Center  
Joseph Pinjush-Assistant U.S. Attorney  
Hugh Shannon-Administrator, Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office  
Joan Synenberg-Judge, Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas  
Craig Tame-Law Enforcement Coordinator, U.S. Attorney's Office  
Michael Tobin-Community Affairs Specialist, U.S. Attorney's Office

These accomplishments are directly aligned with the overarching goals of the CCOTF.

- Reduce the stigma associated with addiction
- Implement harm reduction strategies to combat abuse and fatalities

## Ohio Department of Health Injury Prevention Grant

Thanks to an existing partnership with the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and successful collaboration with the CCOTF, CCBH was selected as a recipient of the Center for Disease Control's Preventative Health and Health Services Block Grant. Funding will be available through 2018 and will cover project activities. These dollars reflect ODH's commitment to meet the needs of Cuyahoga County residents through specific programming implemented at the local level. 2016 marked year three of the five-year funding cycle.

The goal of this grant is to significantly reduce fatalities associated with drug abuse through the development of comprehensive, multi-faceted, population-based programs and policies. CCBH has been fortunate to collaborate with key community partners that have expanded the opportunity to effect change and have a positive impact on reducing the number of accidental fatalities.

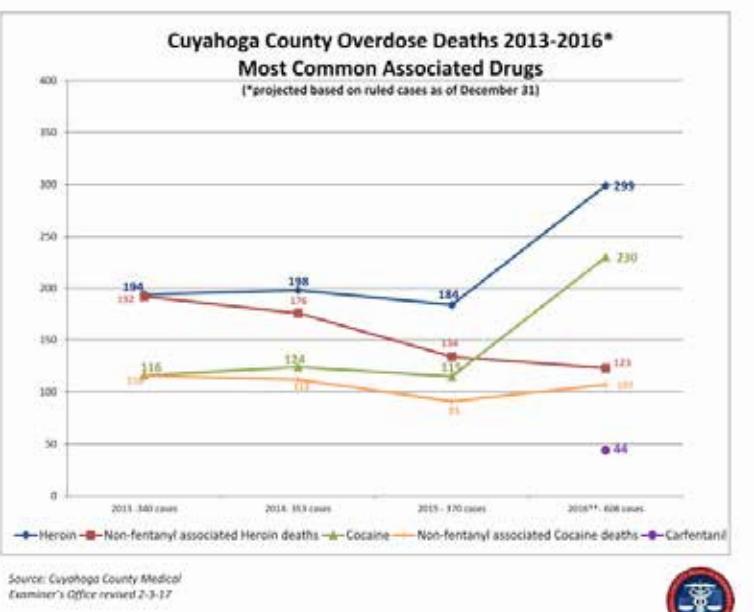
### Year three sub-grantees included:

#### The Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office

The Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office (CCMEO) is a public service agency responsible for the investigation of violent, suspicious, sudden and unexpected deaths. These include overdose deaths due to opiates and heroin. The CCMEO continued to lead the Poison Death Review (PDR) Committee, reviewing all opioid-related fatalities in Cuyahoga County. The data generated from the PDR committee is used to monitor trends and target future education and prevention efforts.

At the request of the Ohio Department of Health, representatives from the Centers for Disease Control visited three major cities in Ohio in October 2015. They spent an entire day at CCBH interviewing key stakeholders to get a firm grasp on fentanyl trends. The purpose of this investigation was to determine the demographics of fentanyl abusers and establish proper prevention tools.

A comprehensive report of their findings was released in early 2016. [http://www.healthy.ohio.gov/-/media/HealthyOhio/ASSETS/Files/injury-prevention/Ohio-PDO-EpiAid-Trip-Report\\_Final-Draft\\_3\\_18\\_2016.pdf?la=en](http://www.healthy.ohio.gov/-/media/HealthyOhio/ASSETS/Files/injury-prevention/Ohio-PDO-EpiAid-Trip-Report_Final-Draft_3_18_2016.pdf?la=en)



## The MetroHealth System

The MetroHealth System created a policy and systems change by adopting and implementing the Ohio State Medical Association's SmartRx Education Module. This module served to better inform providers about the clinical, legislative, regulatory, and patient education components surrounding the opiate abuse crisis in Ohio. The SmartRx online training modules offer an interactive and engaging delivery method which provides busy physicians with up-to-date information when they need it.



Based on data gathered from the CCMEO's PDR Committee and current Project DAWN sites, several new naloxone education and distribution sites have been established. Cuyahoga County now has a total of eight permanent distribution locations along with various community distribution events. Since its inception in 2013, Cuyahoga County Project DAWN has disseminated over 7,500 kits and documented nearly 750 lives saved.

In 2016, MetroHealth, Cuyahoga County Project DAWN, provided technical assistance and served as a resource for existing and newly developed Project DAWN sites throughout the state. They also developed a comprehensive toolkit, with accompanying training video, to guide interested parties on how to properly implement a Project DAWN program in their community.

TOOLKIT: <http://www.odh.ohio.gov/en/health/vipp/drug/Project-DAWN-Toolkit>

VIDEO: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7\\_ztuHo1JHo&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7_ztuHo1JHo&feature=youtu.be)

## Dr. Melanie Golembiewski

Dr. Melanie Golembiewski, MD, Preventive Medicine Resident at University Hospitals Case Medical Center (UHCMC), has coordinated a field component to supplement the substance abuse prevention and treatment curriculum for medical residents in both the Family Medicine Residency Program and the Preventive Medicine Residency Program at UHCMC. Both programs focus on training the next generation of leaders while also reflecting the national call to bridge the gap between public health and clinical medicine using a broader socioecological perspective.



In addition to developing, streamlining, and operationalizing an opioid prescribing policy suitable for a federally qualified health center and providing medical provider training in regard to proper prescribing guidelines and law, Dr. Golembiewski worked to continue to identify knowledge, training, and practice gaps amongst medical providers and trainees.

Advanced Practice Nurses (APNs) are mid-level providers often used as physician extenders, but also frequently work independently. Training regarding opioid prescribing, recognition of abuse and dependence, and the individual and population health approaches to combat the epidemic of opioid morbidity and mortality is variable and often lacking in the training programs. Dr. Golembiewski provided two educational workshops for two separate groups of primary care APN trainees and practitioners focused on the public health perspective of the opioid epidemic, proper opioid medication prescribing guidelines, and state regulations regarding opioid prescribing.

## Discount Drug Mart

Dr. Joan Papp, MetroHealth, was instrumental in advocating for the passage of HB 4 in 2015. This legislation greatly increased access to naloxone in Cuyahoga County for 2016 by allowing physicians to create a standing order and authorize one or more individuals to personally furnish a supply of naloxone pursuant to a protocol. MetroHealth, in collaboration with CCBH and Discount Drug Mart (DDM), established a standing orders protocol and worked to establish a training program for all pharmacists and pharmacy technicians at DDM. In early 2016, DDM piloted naloxone distribution at three Northeast Ohio pharmacy locations. As of March 2016, all 73 DDM's throughout Ohio were equipped to properly dispense naloxone to individuals wishing to obtain a kit, without a prescription. DDM also created a patient education flyer that will be distributed with every opioid prescription filled at all of their Ohio locations.



## Recovery Resources

Utilizing the results of the behavioral assessments and the policy scans conducted at Case Western Reserve University and Baldwin Wallace University in years one and two of the grant, it was determined that a continued, more comprehensive approach to collegiate prevention education was necessary. Building upon an existing relationship with Recovery Resources, prevention education was able to be expanded across Northeast Ohio to seven colleges/universities in Northeast Ohio. Targeted education was provided at the following institutions: Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland Institute of Art, Cleveland State University, Cuyahoga County Community College, John Carroll University, Notre Dame College, and Ursuline College. Topics included substance abuse prevention with a focus on prescription pain medication, Mental Health First Aid, and factors that contribute to vulnerability for mental illness and addiction. Recovery Resources is also in the process of assisting the Cleveland Institute of Art in revamping its substance use policy.

## Mahoning and Trumbull County Boards of Health

Both county health departments continued to expand their capacity to address drug overdose in their communities by working collaboratively with a wide array of local agencies. Efforts included involvement in local coalitions, expanding access to naloxone and operating Project DAWN sites, working with local hospital systems to assess proper prescribing guidelines, OARRS usage, and rates of neonatal abstinence syndrome, as well as working with local colleges and universities to increase awareness and address drug overdose among students and faculty.



Project DAWN (Deaths Avoided with Naloxone) is an opioid overdose education and naloxone distribution (OEND) program. Its purpose is to save lives by providing naloxone to individuals and families of those who are at-risk for opioid overdose. Program participants learn about the risk factors for opioid overdose, how to respond to an opioid overdose by calling 911, giving rescue breaths, and administering nasal naloxone. They are given free naloxone kits containing two vials of Naloxone Hydrochloride medication.

Those eligible to participate are individuals at-risk for opioid overdose, whether in recovery for opioid use disorder or actively using opioids, and individuals who may be in a future position to assist someone who is at-risk of opioid overdose.

Ohio's first Project DAWN began in 2012 as a pilot program initiated by the Ohio Department of Health in Scioto County. Cuyahoga County's Project DAWN was launched on March 1, 2013 and has since documented nearly 750 overdose rescues.

Project DAWN is funded by the MetroHealth System, the Ohio Department of Health, the Cuyahoga County Executive's Office, and the Alcohol Drug and Mental Health Services Board of Cuyahoga County.

### Community access to Cuyahoga County Project DAWN

Cuyahoga County Project DAWN operates four free community walk-in clinics that are accessible to individuals regardless of what county they live in.

#### City of Cleveland - EMS Headquarters

1701 Lakeside Ave, Cleveland, Ohio 44114

Walk-in hours: Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Note: Cleveland EMS Headquarters has free parking available on the street

#### The Cuyahoga County Board of Health

5550 Venture Dr., Parma, OH

Walk-in hours: Fridays, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

#### The Free Medical Clinic of Greater Cleveland

12201 Euclid Ave., Cleveland, OH

Walk-in hours: Fridays, 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.

#### Thomas F. McCafferty Health Center

4242 Lorain Ave., Cleveland, OH

Walk-in hours: Thursdays, 4 p.m. - 8 p.m.



\*For a list of all Project DAWN sites throughout Ohio, please visit <http://www.healthy.ohio.gov/-/media/HealthyOhio/ASSETS/Files/injury-prevention/Project-Dawn/List-of-ProjectDAWN-sites-October-4-2016.pdf?la=en>

## Naloxone Available at Local Pharmacies

Section 4729.44 of the Ohio Revised Code and rule 4729-5-39 of the Ohio Administrative Code authorizes a pharmacist or pharmacy intern under the direct supervision of a pharmacist to dispense naloxone without a prescription in accordance with a physician-approved protocol.

Through a partnership with MetroHealth, the Cuyahoga County Board of Health, and Discount Drug Mart, a standing orders protocol was established. Discount Drug Mart is now fully equipped to furnish naloxone at all of its 73 Ohio pharmacies.

\*For a list of all pharmacies dispensing naloxone, please visit <http://pharmacy.ohio.gov/Licensing/NaloxonePharmacy.aspx>

## Naloxone and Law Enforcement

The Ohio Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS), has committed grant funding for county health departments to enhance access to naloxone: up to \$500,000 in each fiscal year, through 2017. Funds allocated to the Cuyahoga County Board of Health were used to purchase naloxone, including complete Project DAWN kits for distribution to law enforcement agencies, emergency personnel, and first responders. This funding has allowed CCBH to equip 47 local law enforcement agencies with naloxone at no cost. To date, law enforcement officials have reported nearly 200 lives saved. According to Jeff Capretto, Special Agent in Charge, Narcotics Detective with the Westshore Enforcement Bureau, "The availability and use of naloxone by our officers has provided us a valuable tool to give the struggling addicted individual another chance."

## Legislative Updates

Ohio's comprehensive approach to fighting drug overdose deaths continues to evolve to address the ever changing nature of this epidemic. New pieces of legislation to fight this crisis include:

**HB110- 911 Good Samaritan Law-** Provides immunity from arrest to the caller reporting an overdose as well as to the person experiencing the overdose, with a few caveats: it only applies immunity to low level offenses, the individuals cannot be on parole, there must be a referral to treatment within 30 days, and immunity will be offered a maximum number of two times.

**HB248-** Provides insurance coverage for abuse-deterrent medication formulations as well as language for immunity from pain restriction on HCAHPS Scores (patient satisfaction scores).

**HB367-** Requires the board of education of each local district to select a health curriculum that includes instruction on the dangers of prescription opioid abuse.

**SB319-** Through the Governor's Opiate Mid-Biennium Review Legislation, SB 319 ensures responsible opioid addiction treatment with the use of suboxone, a medication that can be part of an effective treatment plan for opioid addiction, expands access to naloxone, holds pharmacy technicians to stronger accountability, establishes new oversight for purchasing and distributing controlled substances, limits high volume prescriptions to prevent misuse, and provides common sense regulation for methadone clinics.



## Facing Addiction in America: The Surgeon General's Report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health

In his capacity as "America's Doctor," Surgeon General Dr. Vivek H. Murthy visited Cleveland and met with key stakeholders to discuss the impacts of the opiate crisis on Northeast Ohio. Murthy toured St. Vincent Charity Medical Center and met with county officials and members of the recovery community to discuss strategies for addressing the opioid problem on a regional and national basis. During his visit, he spoke of his pending historic report that would address the complexities of addiction.



On November 17, the Office of the U.S. Surgeon General released the first comprehensive report dedicated to alcohol and drug misuse and addiction in America. "Facing Addiction in America: the Surgeon General's Report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health" is a call to action to address the problems which have been highlighted by the current opiate crisis across America.

The Surgeon General's report presents the staggering costs to our country of alcohol and drug use: a yearly impact of \$249 billion for alcohol misuse and \$193 billion for illicit drug use. Since its release, many are predicting major changes in public policy, funding priorities, and health care strategies which could equal the effects of the surgeon general's 1964 report about smoking and health.

The report states that only about 10 percent of Americans who have a substance use disorder receive any form of professional treatment. Over 40 percent of people with a substance use disorder also have a co-occurring mental health disorder. However, less than half (48 percent) of those with both conditions actually receive treatment for either.

Those concerning statistics contribute to the report's strong call to increase accessibility to treatment across the country and close what is called the "treatment gap." The surgeon general's report is quick to alleviate fears that this would only contribute to more costs for American taxpayers to absorb. Research behind this report indicates that for every \$1 invested in treatment of substance use disorders, our country saves \$4 in related healthcare costs and lost productivity, and \$7 in criminal justice costs.

Preventing future problems related to substance use disorders is also an important part of the report. Neurobiological research strongly supports the importance of preventing and delaying young people from drinking or using drugs while their brains and bodies are still developing.

While there are many changes that need to occur, we can be optimistic about the following:

- addiction may be chronic, but it is treatable
- health care reform and health care delivery changes are improving recovery and prevention access
- support services, such as 12-step programs and other mutual aid groups, are increasing across the country
- the criminal justice system is recognizing that its work must change — treatment and aftercare must be available
- we now have data to show what prevention and treatment programs are most effective

The full report can be found at [www.addiction.surgeongeneral.gov](http://www.addiction.surgeongeneral.gov).

# CCOTF Collaborative Initiatives

## 3rd Annual "We Are the Majority" Youth Rally

Over 200 high school youth and youth leaders from across Northeast Ohio came together on April 28, 2016 to participate in the third annual **We Are the Majority Youth Rally**. The students gathered at the Global Center for Health Innovation, participated in numerous team-building activities, and then attended a rally at Cleveland City Hall. Dr. Stephen Sroka, President, Health Education Consultants and member of the Cuyahoga County Opiate Task Force, delivered an inspiring message to the students. The main purpose of this rally was to raise awareness to the fact that the majority of youth make healthy choices and do not partake in drug and alcohol abuse. This event will continue in 2017.

Promotional Video for the Rally can be viewed here:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6e83ZAmvRgE>

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual MetroHealth Baby Shower

Babies with neonatal abstinence syndrome experience withdrawal symptoms, respiratory complications, low birth weight, feeding difficulties and seizures. They can spend days or weeks in the NICU. The number of babies treated for neonatal abstinence syndrome at MetroHealth's NICU has gone up every year, from 58 in 2012 to over 100 in 2016.

Up to 125 women and babies at MetroHealth will be enrolled in MetroHealth's Maternal Opiate Medical Support (M.O.M.S.) program, one of four active programs in Ohio designed to reduce the number and length of hospital stays for women being treated for heroin and other opiate addiction and dependency, and for their babies being treated for neonatal abstinence syndrome. Launched with grant money through the Governor's Office of Health Transformation's Innovation Fund, program partners include Ohio Medicaid and the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

MetroHealth provides every mom and her newborn with vital medical care and other services they need to overcome their addiction, but babies need more than a substance-free start. As a way to provide the basic necessities to the mothers and their babies, MetroHealth organized a county wide baby shower.

This year the members of the CCOTF collected essential items such as diapers, wipes, bath soap, books, onesies, sleepers, etc. throughout the month of October. Items were then taken to MetroHealth, where on the morning of November 5, 2016, the moms had a chance to come and "shop" for the items that were of greatest need. Allisyn Leppla, Sheryl Hirsch, and Maryann Salib of the CCOTF helped to distribute the items to the women and their babies. Through generous donations, over \$5,000 worth of necessary items were able to be donated to this program.

The following video highlights the stories of two moms who have successfully completed the program. <https://vimeo.com/128624772>



## EpiCenter Data Briefs

EpiCenter is Ohio's statewide syndromic surveillance system used by state and local public health agencies to detect, track and characterize health events. This system has traditionally been used to monitor pandemic influenza, communicable illnesses, environmental exposures and potential bioterrorism in real-time. EpiCenter categorizes/classifies information from the chief complaint recorded in emergency room (ER) visits and automatically alerts public health when an unusual pattern or trend is occurring. EpiCenter was recently enhanced to include the ability to identify anomalies when drug-related ER visits rapidly increase, allowing local health to respond appropriately using timely information.

With guidance from the ODH, CCBH adopted a plan that will allow for epidemiologic investigations to confirm increases in drug overdose ER visits and ultimately mobilize key community partners and resources to mitigate the circumstances and prevent additional fatalities.

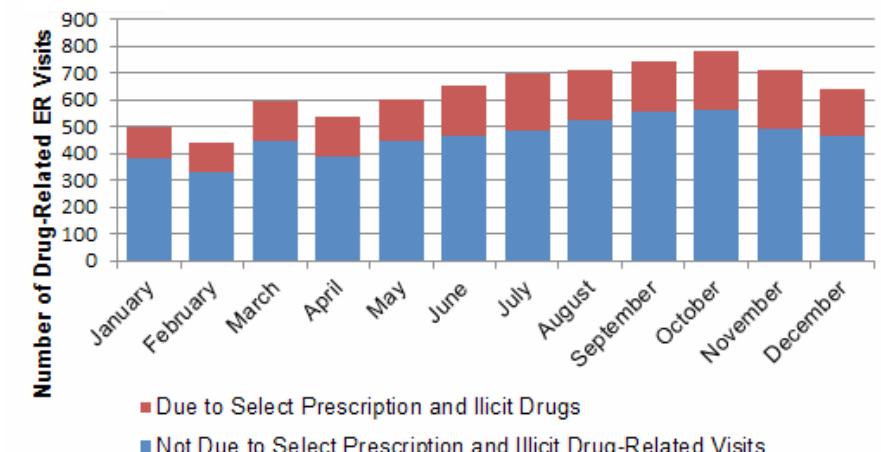
Through a collaborative effort with Vince Caraffi and Allisyn Leppla, along with the Cuyahoga County Board of Health Epidemiology and Surveillance Service Area Director, Chris Kippes, and Dr. Erica Stovsky, CWRU, data briefs were created to highlight drug-related hospital ER visits. Records for patients considered for inclusion in these reports had visits that were grouped under the "Drugs" classifier. Records were excluded if the chief complaint was related to acetaminophen, ibuprofen, or suicide.

## Future Initiatives

We are optimistic about seeing a reduction in drug overdose fatalities in 2017. Understanding that collaboration is critical to the success of the CCOTF, we look forward to working with an ever-increasing range of individuals and organizations in Cuyahoga County that are dedicated to seeing positive changes for those suffering with addiction.



**Number of Drug-Related ER Visits By Month and Select Prescription and Illicit Drugs\***



■ Due to Select Prescription and Illicit Drugs

■ Not Due to Select Prescription and Illicit Drug-Related Visits

## Syringe Exchange Programs

Those who inject drugs are at increased risk of acquiring HIV, Hepatitis C, and various infections. Syringe exchange programs (SEP) can help an individual injecting drug reduce the risk of causing themselves additional harm or spreading infectious diseases. The program can also serve as a resource for drug treatment programs.

Research shows that Syringe Exchange Programs:

- Do not lead to increased drug use
- Do not lead to increase crime
- Help link addicts to drug treatment programs and HIV prevention services
- Help prevent the spread of HIV, Hepatitis C, and other diseases
- Reduce the number of improperly discarded syringes



There are currently seven SEP's operating in Ohio, including one in Cuyahoga County.

Circle Health Services Syringe Exchange Program is the first, and currently one of only few, licensed programs in the State of Ohio. The program has had a significant impact on reducing the incidence of HIV infection through injection drug use since its inception in 1995. In 1994 (the year prior to the implementation of the Health Center's SEP), HIV infection incidence rate among injection drug users in Cuyahoga County was 14%, with the incidence rate for the City of Cleveland at 18%. By 2011, the incidence rate in Cuyahoga County had decreased to 1%, and it dropped to 0.8% in the City of Cleveland. City officials contributed this significant decrease in part to the success of the Health Center's SEP.

In addition to providing sterile syringes to the injection drug users (through a one-for-one exchange), the program also provides HIV and Hepatitis C testing, basic wound care, safer injection kits, condoms and other barriers for sexual activities, as well as influenza vaccines.

The program currently exchanges more than **495,000** needles annually through its clinic location and two mobile sites in the City of Cleveland as well as:

- Approximately **4,000** new clients are served each year
- **742** clients are referred to medical services within the Health Center each year.
- Approximately **9,000** pieces of prevention education literature are distributed by the program annually.
- More than **134,000** condoms are distributed through SEP annually.
- Nearly **800** clients are referred to drug treatment services each year

Currently syringes can be exchanged at the following three locations:

- Circle Health Services, 12201 Euclid Ave., Monday - Thursday 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. / Fridays 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
- HUMADOP at 3305 West 25th Street, Hours: 9 a.m.- noon
- East 83rd and Cedar Avenue, Hours: 1-3 p.m.

## Potential Expansion

The Cleveland Department of Public Health, the Cuyahoga County Board of Health and the AIDS Funding Collaborative hosted a stakeholders meeting to discuss the legalization and expansion of local SEP programs. These meetings aimed to share information and begin creating a local protocol, in accordance with ORC 3707.57, for Cleveland based exchanges, both new and existing. Conversations and strategic planning will continue in 2017.

## Reproductive Health Empowerment for Women in Recovery

Alcohol and drug dependent women live with health challenges that may include active substance abuse, stigma, and complex systems of care. Substance dependent women and women newly in recovery are also at high risk for:

- Acute and chronic disease
- Exposure to violence
- Higher rates of smoking
- HIV and sexually transmitted disease
- Intense emotional trauma
- Mental Health concerns
- Unintended pregnancy



In response, representatives from the Cuyahoga County Board of Health Title X Reproductive Health Clinic, in collaboration with the Cuyahoga County Opiate Task Force and Better Birth Control **NEO**, met with representatives from women's recovery housing agencies in Cuyahoga County to discuss the need for reproductive health services for women in recovery. Some of the topics addressed included high rates of unintended pregnancy, poor birth outcomes, screening and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases, and the need for breast and cervical cancer screening among women in recovery. These are often overlooked health needs among this vulnerable group of women.

The program is still in the developmental stages. Plans for 2017 include:

- Providing education, testing, and appointment referrals for the women at recovery houses across Cuyahoga County
- Gathering data about reproductive health, stigma, health care barriers, and empowerment of women experiencing addiction and in recovery
- Expansion to other women's recovery centers throughout the Greater Cleveland area.

## Success Story

Every year while composing this annual report, it becomes very difficult to find an image for the cover that represents the work being done by the members of the CCOTF. Not just an image, but a positive depiction of great work being done by dedicated individuals who are committed to seeing this epidemic come to an end in Cuyahoga County.

Stigma often plagues those who are battling a substance abuse disorder. When we hear the statistics, we all too often forget that these numbers represent someone's father, mother, son, daughter, brother, or sister. Addiction to opioids is hard to overcome, but certainly not impossible, and recovery should be celebrated.

The cover image for the 2016 CCOTF annual report was a product of the collaboration among two talented individuals in recovery. Bethany, the artist behind the drawing and painting of the image and Mike, the photographer who was able to capture a high resolution image and provide a digital file of the painting. Below, in their own words, are their stories.

**Bethany** - My life changed on July 29, 2016. I was sitting in detox at Rosary Hall when I was recommended to go to inpatient treatment. I had been using drugs and alcohol for 10 years, never suffering any major consequences. Partying was fun and I had experimented with a variety of drugs. I tried everything, telling myself that it was okay because I was in college, this is what college kids do.

The following year I was blessed with my first son. After he was born, I saw a doctor for back pain that I had been experiencing for the last two years. With this, I was unknowingly entering the belly of the beast, later known as my addiction. For the next six years, I was using and abusing prescription drugs beginning with Vicodin and Percocet then progressing to Fentanyl patches. Just as my prescriptions got stronger so did my disease.

By this time, I was a mother of two boys, a wife to their father, and a slave to opiates. Pills and patches ran my life. When my prescriptions were stopped because of my successful back surgery, I felt lost. Getting high was the only way I knew how to function and cope. The mental obsession, the devil disease inside my head lead me to seek out my own drugs. That's when I found heroin.

Within one year, heroin took away everything I was. I turned into a lying, stealing, and selfish shell of a human being. I didn't know how to live and didn't want to. I was no longer mothering my kids. This showed me the reality of my addiction. The fact that my sweet little boys were not enough to get me to stop. The love of my family was not enough either. I was beyond human help. Shame and guilt consumed me to the point that I prayed God would not wake me in the morning. All in hope that I would be free from the clutches of heroin.

Then, there I was, my third detox, when God opened my heart. I was there for four days, contemplating leaving the entire time, when a stranger said, "stop lying to yourself." I knew that my life would only get worse if I went back out, this has been tested and proven. This stranger had struck something in me which gave me hope that there could be another way to live.

I prayed loud and hard that God would save me from myself. I asked Him to help me through this, whatever his way might be, because mine wasn't working. It was that day in July that I became willing, willing to change. Willing to listen, willing to do something different and be uncomfortable.



I spent three soul searching months in rehab, and now in recovery, I am truly getting back what I've lost. Today I am becoming a mother, wife, daughter, sister and friend again. My family is proud of me. I have the opportunity to raise my kids, to be present- physically and emotionally. I'll never be the perfect mom, but I'm their mom and that's all they ever wanted... and that's pretty perfect!

I also have something I didn't before and that's hope. I designed the cover with this in mind. There's so much hope I see through the hearts and eyes of people in recovery and those working in the field to help. Through personal stories, I know that I'm not alone.

I painted Cleveland at sunrise because today, I thank God when I wake up. I'm grateful to start my day knowing I'm not a prisoner, that I have freedom from heroin. With each new day, God gives us new hope.

**Mike** - In the last year of my addiction I lost it all. The streets had become my home, but the pain of the plummet was nothing compared to the agony of the collision at the end, when God showed me, me.

To addiction I gave my family, employment, freedom, health, sanity and home yet I was the kind of addict that still had all the answers. But my God has a funny way of showing me the truth.



We call it "that right amount of pain", and it came to me at the unlikeliest of moments during an all too familiar event. While sitting in a fast food restaurant, across from the privileged high school I had attended 15 years before, I watched the young wildcats jumping, laughing and celebrating the same hope I once had. I saw a clear reflection of my spiritual demise as I watched sepia toned memories play in slow motion. I begged for money, looking into timid eyes, and saw what they saw in me. On this day, they wouldn't mock. They looked at me like a monster. They were truly afraid. I turned the other way and back towards the shelter when a sole tear washed my vision and revealed the much needed moment of clarity.

It dragged me to my knees and from my mouth words like these, "God... I don't know how to do this... I'll do whatever you want." I imagine that moment of defeat and victory. I picture a guardian angel by my side, finally smiling and walking away because her mission was now complete.

This was my true surrender and God's answer was the ignition I needed. It sparked the torch that lead me to the light and burns of roaring flames today. Thank you God for that moment. Thank you God for showing me, me, for the horror of the truth has set me free.

That was the last day I had to use a mind or mood altering chemical. Since then, my life has turned into a peace I didn't know was possible. I can gratefully say, I'm a loving father to my beautiful son. I'm a brother and son to the family who thought they'd bury me. I'm an honest and reliable employee. I'm an artist. I wake eager for the day and find such joy in traveling, hiking, exercise and even just talking with a friend. The laughs I have today are deep, full and abundant. I enjoy helping people and find myself still saying, but this time with a smile, "I can't believe this is me. I can't believe this is my life."

The Cuyahoga County Opiate Task Force is committed to significantly reducing fatalities associated with opiate abuse. The CCOTF will continue to meet on a bimonthly basis in 2017 and all meetings are open to anyone wishing to attend.

**For more information or to become a member, please visit:**

[www.opiatecollaborative.cuyahogacounty.us](http://www.opiatecollaborative.cuyahogacounty.us)

Twitter.com/OpiateTaskForce

Facebook.com/CuyahogaCountyOpiateTaskForce



### Questions?

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BOARD OF HEALTH

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