



Cuyahoga County
Together We Thrive



Cuyahoga County
Medical Examiner's Office

CUYAHOGA COUNTY
BOARD OF HEALTH
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Recommendations of the Cuyahoga County Overdose Fatality Review Committee January – December 2021

Purpose: The Cuyahoga County Overdose Fatality Review (OFR) committee meets bimonthly to conduct case review meetings and create recommendations for interventions to prevent future fatal overdoses.

Current representation for the OFR includes the following agencies:

- Alcohol Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services Board (ADAMHS)
- Case Western Reserve University, Mandel School for Applied Social Sciences, Begun Center for Violence Prevention and Research Education (CWRU)
- Cleveland Division of Police Heroin Involved Death Investigation Team (HIDI)
- Cuyahoga County Board of Health (CCBH)
- Cuyahoga County Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS)
- Cuyahoga County Drug Court
- Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office (CCMEO)
- MetroHealth Medical Center, Office of Opioid Safety, Project DAWN
- Parma Detention Center Administrator
- St. Vincent Charity Medical Center
- The Woodrow Project
- VA Northeast Ohio Health Care System (VANEOMS) and Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center
- Westshore Enforcement Bureau Task Force (WEB)

The recommendations of the OFR committee are based upon case reviews of fatal overdose deaths in Cuyahoga County. The recommendations are not meant to be exhaustive nor encompass all efforts that are being done in Cuyahoga County for the prevention and intervention of overdose-related deaths.

Highlights of some stakeholder activities are provided as they relate to OFR recommendations. These highlights do not include all activities being done in our community towards reducing both non-fatal and fatal overdoses. Activities conducted by stakeholders may include various types and sources of funding.

Recommendations

Goal 1: Harm Reduction

Target audience: Medication assisted treatment (MAT) providers; Office of Re-Entry; Dept. of Children and Family Service (DCFS); domestic violence shelters; homeless shelters; business sector (food service, hotel/motel, trades industry, retail) etc.

Objective 1.1 Increase knowledge and awareness of harm reduction efforts

Activity 1.1.1: Support outreach/grassroots efforts for making fentanyl test strip (FTS) and naloxone available within local communities and targeted hot spots

Activity 1.1.2: Advocate training for DCFS staff regarding naloxone distribution to families in need

Activity 1.1.3: Advocate naloxone training for kinship families through Project DAWN

Objective 1.2 Increase availability of harm reduction tools (naloxone, fentanyl test strips, syringes, naloxbox, etc.)

Activity 1.2.1: Support access to fentanyl test strips to encourage testing drug supplies for fentanyl and fentanyl analogs

Activity 1.2.2: Support widescale distribution of harm reduction materials

Objective.1.3 Support the Implementation of the Naloxbox program in Cuyahoga County

Activity 1.3.1: Advocate for installation of naloxboxes in various locations (e.g. Project DAWN service entities)

Activity 1.3.2: Support facilitation of training on the use of the naloxboxes

Highlights of 2021:

- In 2021, Alcohol Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services Board of Cuyahoga County (ADAMHS) provided community outreach and grassroots efforts to distribute fentanyl test strips.
- ADAMHS Board also worked with MetroHealth's Project DAWN program to determine and install over 51 naloxboxes throughout various locations in Cuyahoga County.
- ADAMHS Board Fentanyl Awareness Campaign (via radio, digital and streaming ads) ran over Memorial Day, Fourth of July and Labor Day weekends, generating over 5 million impressions and 891 clicks on the testyourdrugsc.com website (as of 10/25). The campaign also ran the week prior to Thanksgiving weekend and the week between Christmas and New Year's Day.
- The ADAMHS Board and several partners including Thrive and Project White Butterfly participated in the State's NaloxBlitz, distributing nearly 3,500 Narcan kits to the public and treatment providers in high incidence overdose zip codes in the summer of 2021.

Goal 2: Medical Prevention and Treatment

Target audience: Qualified practitioners including physicians, Nurse Practitioners (NPs), Physician Assistants (PAs), Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNSs), Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNAs), and Certified Nurse-Midwives (CNMs)

Objective 2.1 Increase number of Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) providers

Activity 2.1.1: Promote access to DATA 2000 waiver

Objective 2.2 Support education and training of medical providers on the illicit use of prescription medications

Activity 2.2.1 Focus education efforts on illicit use of prescription medications

Activity 2.2.2 Focus education efforts on appropriate prescribing with chronic pain and co-occurring SUD or co-occurring mental health diagnosis

Highlight of 2021: The CCMEO conducted a gabapentin information session at the Northeast Ohio Hospital Consortium and Case Western Reserve University's Physician Assistant program. CCMEO also presented gabapentin information at the National Association of Medical Examiners Annual Meeting in October 2021.

Goal 3: Linkage to Care

Target audience: Hospitals, peer support programs, diversion center, quick response teams (QRT); law enforcement, fire departments, EMS, specialty court dockets

Objective 3.1 Advocate for increased availability for peer support programs to provide outreach to high-risk populations (e.g. previous nonfatal overdose, diagnosed with SUD, or at risk for substance use disorder)

Activity 3.1.1: Encourage hospital emergency departments to adopt 24/7 peer support programs

Activity 3.1.2: Encourage specialty court dockets to adopt peer support programs

Objective 3.2 Encourage collaborations among first responders and treatment providers to improve linkages to treatment for individuals experiencing a nonfatal overdose

Activity 3.2.1: Support utilization of quick response teams (QRT) outreach/capacity

Activity 3.2.2: Support utilization of the Cuyahoga County Diversion Center

Objective 3.3 Support linkage to MAT and recovery housing/sober living appropriate to a person's needs

Highlights of 2021:

- A local Quick Response Teams (QRT) was able to connect 225 individuals (out of 458) who experienced a non-fatal overdose with treatment using law enforcement incident reports.
- [Project SOAR \(Supporting Opioid Addiction Recovery\)](#) has expanded to all Cleveland Clinic Emergency Departments through a partnership with Thrive to provide 24/7 access

to peer support services. This collaboration was supported by ADAMHS utilizing Opioid Settlement Funding for Cuyahoga County.

Goal 4: Education

Target: General public, local public defenders, judges, lawyers, OVI intervention programs, youth bereavement programs, Ohio Workers Compensation, business sector (food service, hotel/motel, trades industry, retail) etc.

Objective 4.1 Advocate for increased eligibility for drug court

Activity 4.1.1: Support continuing education for public defenders, lawyers, and judges on individuals appropriate for drug court

Objective 4.2 Support the enhancement of substance use education and prevention initiatives including the progression of addiction, polysubstance use, addressing adverse childhood experiences

Activity 4.2.1: Increase understanding among the business sector (food service, hotel/motel, trades industry, retail) on the impact substance use can have on employees, patrons and property; promote implementation of Ohio's BWC drug-free safety program

Activity 4.2.2: Promote bereavement interventions for youth and young adults in utilizing healthy coping mechanisms after exposures to traumatic experiences

Objective 4.3 Promote appropriate and targeted communication efforts to increase public awareness regarding existing and emerging substances

Activity 4.3.1: Support media and awareness campaigns on emerging trends (e.g. fentanyl adulterating all drug supplies; gabapentin increase in prescribing, illicit use, etc.)

Goal 5: Building System Capacities

Target audience: EMS; law enforcement; specialty court dockets (including pre-arraignment); parole officers, treatment centers; Office of Re-entry; MetroHealth EXam Program, Cuyahoga County Corrections Center, municipality jails, Grafton Correctional institution, Cuyahoga County Juvenile Detention Center

Objective 5.1 Enhance SUD treatment for incarcerated populations

Objective 5.2 Promote timely communication systems to notify appropriate agencies of non-fatal overdose events

Objective 5.3 Advocate for uniform practices and policies for providing individuals upon release from incarceration at both private and public facilities with treatment resources and harm reduction materials

Goal 6: Community Outreach

Target audience: Sober living facilities (certified and non-certified); detoxification centers; rehabilitation centers, shelters

Objective 6.1 Promote outreach to community agencies regarding the importance of relapse and recovery plan review, wrap around services, and accessibility for support group meetings

Objective 6.2 Support community outreach to vulnerable populations (including homeless populations)

Activity 6.2.1 Provide resources and information in applicable locations

Goal 7: Surveillance and Dissemination

Target audience: OFR, OFR Stakeholder Meeting, local meetings (HOTF, CCOTF); Ohio Injury Prevention Partnership

Objective 7.1 Routinely disseminate trends reviewed from the OFR along with supporting data

Objective 7.2 Convene quarterly stakeholder meetings to review recommendations and call for action

Objective 7.3 Enhance the case review process by identifying new/relevant OFR review participants and data sources (e.g. hospital partners, peer supporters, law enforcement partners/data)

Activity 7.3.1 Support data sharing between Veterans Affairs and the CCMEQ

Highlight of 2021: The CCOFR participated in a mentor site visit with Ocean County OFR that was facilitated by the Institute for Intergovernmental Research (IIR). The CCOFR was able to observe Ocean County's process and speak with a behavioral health treatment provider to better understand data sharing. Ocean County also observed a CCOFR meeting and provided feedback for improvement.

The CCOFR was awarded the Ohio Injury Prevention Partnership's 2021 Promising Practice Award.

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