

Overdose Awareness Day Talking Points

More people are dying from overdose than car accidents.

- Overdose deaths are now the leading cause of accidental deaths, surpassing motor vehicle accidents in Boulder County since 2005.¹
- On average, more than 30 people die of opioid-related accidental overdose each year in Boulder County.¹
- In Colorado, one person dies from a drug overdose every 10 hours.²
- In the U.S. one person dies from drug overdose every 11 minutes in the United States.²
- Every day, more than 75 people in our country die from a prescription drug or heroin overdose.²
- The Boulder County syringe access program has seen a seven-fold increase in clients since 2010.³

Overdose is linked to easy access to prescription medicine.

- In 2013, nearly 250 million prescriptions were written for opioids – enough for every adult in the U.S. to have a bottle of pills.⁴
- 4 in 10 Colorado adults say they've misused prescription medicine.⁵
- This includes pain medications like Oxycontin, Percocet, and Vicodin; stimulants like Adderall and Ritalin; and anti-anxiety medications like Valium, Librium, and Xanax.

Safe storage of medications is an important step to reducing abuse.

- 42 percent of Colorado's teens say it's easy to get prescription drugs from their parents' medicine cabinets.⁵
- One of the best ways to help prevent opioid abuse and overdose is to store prescription drugs in a locked cabinet and dispose of any medication that's no longer being used.
- Several prescription drug disposal programs are available through Boulder County Hazardous Materials Management and the Sheriff's office. National Drug Take-Back Day on October 22 is another opportunity to safely dispose of unwanted prescription medications.

Overdose affects all social classes, age, gender, and races.

- 1 in 7 Colorado high school students, including 1 in 6 of the state's high school seniors, have misused or abused prescription drugs.⁵
- The average age of participants of the Works' syringe exchange program has decreased steadily - in 2008, the average age was 42; in 2015 the average age was 29.³

Overdose reversal medication and training is available. Getting help is legal.

- Narcan (Naloxone), an opioid overdose reversal medication is now available over-the-counter at pharmacies in Boulder County. Boulder County Public Health will provide Narcan training to anyone at no charge. Visit BoulderCountyWorks.org for more information.
- Since November 2013, fifteen lives have been saved with Narcan. Over 150 individuals, 63 Boulder police officers, and 10 University of Colorado officers have been trained to use Narcan.³
- The 911 Good Samaritan Law encourages individuals who witness an overdose to call for help without fearing prosecution from drug possession or underage drinking.



We must talk publicly about overdose in order to eliminate it.

- When the community speaks openly about addiction, it helps to reduce stigma and make it easier for those struggling with it to feel more comfortable asking for help.
- Governor Hickenlooper took a first step in bringing the issue to light by proclaiming the first Colorado Overdose Awareness Day in 2013.
- Observing Overdose Awareness Day is one of the ways to raise awareness about overdose and reduce stigma of a drug-related death.
- Boulder County Public Health is developing an Opioid Advisory Group with community partners to raise awareness and find solutions together. Any community organization interested in participating is welcome.

Sources:

¹ Colorado Vital Statistics Mortality Data Set. Retrieved from http://www.chd.dphe.state.co.us/topics.aspx?q=Mortality_Data

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2016, January 1). Increases in Drug and Opioid Overdose Deaths – United States, 2000-2014. *MMWR. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Reports*. Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6450a3.htm?s_cid=mm6450a3_w

³ Boulder County Public Health. Works Program Report 2016.

⁴ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 2014.

⁵ TakeMedsSeriously.org Fact Sheet. Retrieved from <http://takemedseriously.org/wp-content/uploads/Take-Meds-Seriously-Fact-Sheet.pdf>