

# Coalition for a Drug Free Brown County



**BROWN COUNTY'S**  
**2017 RESPONSE TO THE**  
**OPIATE EPIDEMIC**



# Understanding the Opiate Epidemic

## WHAT ARE OPIATES?

An opiate is a narcotic analgesic that depresses the central nervous system. Natural opiates are derived from the poppy plant. Synthetic opiates are manufactured drugs designed to mimic the effects of naturally derived opiates. Together, natural and synthetic opiates are known as "opioids." Today, the most common prescribed opioids include morphine, codeine, Vicodin, Percocet and OxyContin.

Opioids work by attaching to proteins called opioid receptors which are found in the brain, spinal cord, and other parts of the body. Due to how opiates impact the body, however, they are highly addictive. Taken in large quantities, opioids can cause slow breathing and death. Heroin is known by a variety of nicknames such as Big H, Black Tar, Thunder and Smack.

The use of Heroin cut with fentanyl or other synthetic drugs is a huge concern in Brown County. Heroin, which is derived from morphine, can be injected via a needle, smoked in a water pipe, mixed into marijuana or a tobacco cigarette, or snorted nasally. Heroin often comes in small packages, and sometimes in small balloons. Since it is frequently cut with other drugs, such as fentanyl, users do not know exactly what they are buying, which can result in overdose and possibly death.

## HOW DID THE EPIDEMIC HAPPEN?

Research shows that the largest cause of the current opiate epidemic is the increased focus on treating pain, and the increased prescribing of pain medications. While healthcare providers were encouraged to treat pain, they were not provided sufficient education on the addictive nature of opiates and/or a focus on the potential of addiction. As use of

prescription pain pills increased, "pill mills" (clinics where painkillers were routinely prescribed inappropriately or for non-medical reasons) began to emerge in Ohio. Numerous people from all walks of life became addicted to prescription pain medication. For some, addiction emerged from legitimate prescribing of the medication while others became addicted due to pill mills. Beginning in 2010, the Ohio Legislature passed laws to address the overprescribing of prescription pain medication,

which made access to opiate prescription drugs more difficult to obtain. This did not stop the misuse of prescription drugs. Prescription pain medications started being sold on the street. When the cost became so high, people switched to heroin, which was readily available and cheaper. Addiction to heroin grew rapidly; approximately 80% of recent heroin addicts originally used legitimately prescribed pain medication before turning to heroin.

## WHAT IS ADDICTION?

Addiction knows no boundaries. Opiate addiction can happen to people of every race, ethnicity, income level, and religious background. Addiction is a complex **disease** that has nothing to do with lack of willpower.

Quitting drug use is very difficult, even if someone desperately wants to quit. Substance abuse changes the functioning and structure of the brain, affecting the person's behavior and judgment, and continues long after the person stops using drugs, including closing the pill mills

Drug addiction can be successfully treated to help people stop using drugs and lead productive lives.

# **WHAT IS THE COALITION FOR A DRUG FREE BROWN COUNTY?**

**The Coalition officially began in October 2015 developing from smaller community coalitions within Brown County to identify and implement solutions to the opiate epidemic.**

**The mission is to develop and maintain coordinated substance abuse prevention and resources for the citizens of Brown County, particularly the youth of this county.**

**The Coalition seeks to reduce the risk and harm that occurs with substance abuse and to promote healthy, safe, and drug-free lifestyles among youth and families in our county.**

## **Opiate Abuse in Brown County**

### **WHAT WE KNOW:**

- ◇ **Brown County has led the state of Ohio in unintentional deaths by overdose (on a per capita basis) since 2012**
- ◇ **Approximately 90% of the Brown County Jail inmates are incarcerated for drug related crimes**
- ◇ **Reported cases of Hepatitis C in Brown County increased by 144% from 2012 to 2016**
- ◇ **Male cases of HIV in Brown County has increased by 47% from 2010 to 2014**
- ◇ **The number of clients in treatment at Talbert House in Brown County for Opioid Disorder has increased 128% since 2015**



# Treatment and Recovery

## TREATMENT STRATEGIES:

Research the need for expanded services.

Provide services for specific populations, such as children, families and provide gender-specific services.

Research and apply for grants and foundation funds.

Collect local data.

Research current resources.

Convene and participate in a community transportation meeting.

## GOALS



# Preventing Opiate Misuse

## PREVENTION EFFORTS:

Educate the community about opiate abuse, the symptoms of opiate abuse and dispel myths about drug addiction.

Distribute information about opioid abuse and resources and programs that are available in the county.

Offer mental health first aid training throughout the county.

Increase the number of prescription drop boxes and educate the community about current drop box locations.

Increase the participation of the faith-based, youth-serving, government officials, medical community and social service agencies in the Coalition for a Drug-Free Brown County.

Continue and increase mentoring programs in Brown County schools.

## GOALS



# Reducing Harm

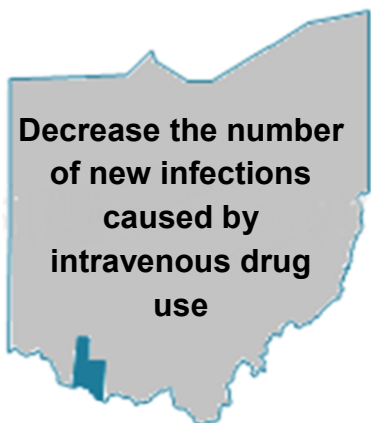
## HARM REDUCTION STRATEGIES:

Increase community support and education.

Increase supports available to families affected by drug addiction.

Increase distribution of Naloxone (Narcan™) in community.

## GOALS



# Supply Reduction

## REDUCTION STRATEGIES:

Reducing Demand

Disrupt Supply

Coordinating Law-Enforcement Agencies

Using Community Oriented Policing

Organizing Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDEF)

Identifying High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA)

Sharing Intelligence and Information

Implementing Technology

Developing Equitable Sentencing Policies

Coordinating Interdiction Operations

## GOALS



# How Can You Help?

## WHAT YOU CAN DO TO FIGHT THE OPIATE EPIDEMIC IN YOUR COMMUNITY

- **Join the Coalition for a Drug Free Brown County (For more information call the Brown County Board of MHAS at 937-378-3504)**
- **Host a Naloxone Distribution Event (For more information call the Brown County Health Department 937-378-6892)**
- **Distribute Opiate OD Prevention Cards in your community**
- **Participate in a Prescription Drug Drop Off event to properly dispose of medications**
- **Familiarize yourself with the signs of abuse**
- **Familiarize yourself with the local resources**
- **Support prevention programming in schools**
- **Share your story of recovery (call Brown County Board of MHAS at 937-378-3504)**

**TO GET A NALOXONE (NARCAN) KIT, CALL  
THE BROWN COUNTY HEALTH  
DEPARTMENT AT 937-378-6892**

**IF YOU OR A LOVED ONE NEEDS HELP, CALL 937-378-3504  
For more information or to obtain a full copy of the plan, call  
the Brown County Board of Mental Health & Addiction  
Services at 937-378-3504**

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