

Regional Advisory Board (RAB) of Community Anti-Drug Coalitions

January 2019 Newsletter

Did you Know:

Fentanyl was the Most Commonly Used Drug in Overdose Deaths

Fentanyl was involved in almost 29 percent of all overdose deaths in 2016, making it the most commonly used drug involved in overdose fatalities, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The rate of drug overdose deaths involving fentanyl jumped by about 113 percent each year from 2013 through 2016. The total number of drug overdose deaths increased 54 percent each year between 2011 and 2016. There were 63,632 drug overdose deaths in the United States in 2016. Most overdoses involved more than one drug, the CDC found. Two-fifths of cocaine-related overdose deaths in 2016 also involved fentanyl, and almost one-third of fentanyl-related overdoses also involved heroin. More than one-fifth of meth-related fatal overdoses also involved heroin. (drugfree.org, 12/13/18)

Heroin, Oxycodone, and Cocaine are the Most Expensive Addictive Substances

The average five-year cost for using heroin 10 times a day is \$318,500. For oxycodone (80 milligrams once a day), the five-year cost is \$132,405. For cocaine (1 gram once a day), the five-year cost is \$112,840. The American Addiction Centers calculated that people who drink 10 beers a day will end up spending more than \$14,000 over five years. People who smoke 10-19 cigarettes a day will spend an average of \$5,000 over five years, while people who use marijuana twice a day will spend an average of \$43,000 over five years. (drugfree.org, 12/13/18)

Risk of Combining Opioids with Other Medications

A new study finds one-fourth of people who take prescription opioid painkillers for long periods are at risk of an overdose from unsafe combinations of prescription medication. Researchers analyzed all prescriptions of controlled substances for almost 302,000 patients in Idaho in 2017. One-third of patients prescribed an opioid had taken the drug for more than 90 days without a break of at least a week. Almost one-fourth of people using prescription opioids for long periods were also prescribed a benzodiazepine or other central nervous system depressant, HealthDay reports. This combination puts patients at risk of an overdose. The study found 44 percent of these overlapping prescriptions were written by more than one prescriber. "Patients with chronic pain are often under the care of several different physicians to manage their different disease states," researcher Catherine Oliphant, a professor of pharmacy practice at Idaho State, said. "This co-management can lead to patients receiving unintentional prescription combinations that put them at higher risk for an opioid overdose." (drugfree.org, 12/13/18)

U.S. Life Expectancy Falls Third Year in a Row

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recently released a report showing a decrease in U.S. life expectancy for the third year in a row. The drop is primarily driven by an increase in suicide rates and drug overdoses. The CDC has finalized 2017 drug overdose mortality data which shows that more than 70,000 people died in 2017 due to a drug overdose, an increase of 10 percent from the previous year. Suicide rates have become the 10th-leading cause of death in the United States, and the second most common cause of death for people

ages 10 to 34. (Indiana State Department of Health, "Drug Overdose Prevention Newscast," 12/11/18.)

Children of the Nation's Drug Crisis Face Long-Term Health Effects

They are the youngest victims of the nation's drug crisis: children of parents with substance abuse disorders. These young people are more susceptible to long-term behavioral and mental health issues.

Twelve-year-old Annie Bourassa knows this all too well. At just 3 years old, she was removed from the care of her biological mother over alleged substance abuse and neglect. For several years she was shuttled between relatives, foster homes and stays in the hospital, surviving abuse and serious injuries from a dog bite. But then Marc Bourassa and Phyllis-Ann Morrissey welcomed young Annie into their lives.

"At first, she was hitting and lashing out verbally, and yelling and screaming," Morrissey told CBS News. The couple adopted Annie into a loving home, but the toll taken by her early childhood trauma took has been profound.

Annie is living with reactive attachment disorder, a serious condition also known as RAD, stemming from the severe neglect she suffered from before she was adopted. Children with the condition find it difficult to build healthy relationships and attachments with new caregivers even when they are showered with love.

"When you consider the trauma, and you consider what she went through, it's not something that's going to go away in a brief period of time," dad Marc Bourassa said.

Annie received years of treatment at Bridgewell, a Massachusetts non-profit organization where Dr. Jackie Devine is a psychologist. Devine told CBS News she's seeing more and more children with RAD because of the current drug crisis.

"It often presents as extreme behavioral issues," she said. Children require intensive therapy for trauma and long-term stability.

"The child needs to have healthy relationships and consistent relationships," Devine said.

Annie's parents say they constantly reassure her that they're not going anywhere.

For Annie, that has been critical for her progress. Today, she is an outgoing sixth grader who wants to help others.

"I want to help people with physical disabilities and be there for them and help them," she said. And Annie's parents say they are committed to helping her, no matter how long it takes. (CBS News, 12/6/18)

The Resurgence of Meth

"When I took those off-white crushed shards up that blue, cut plastic straw—well, my whole world pretty much changed after that. There was a feeling like — my God, this is what I've been missing my entire life. It completed me. I felt whole for the first time." These are the words of Nic Sheff describing his experience with methamphetamine in his autobiography, *Tweak*. In February 2018, *The New York Times* ran a story, "Meth, the Forgotten Killer, Is Back. And It's Everywhere." And it seems that it is. Government actions in 2006 restricted access to pseudoephedrine, a key ingredient used in making meth, resulting in a temporary decline in use. However, meth is on the rise again, largely smuggled in from Mexico. According to the DEA's 2017 threat assessment, its purity has been steadily climbing and is now well above 90 percent. It's also cheap, at \$5 per hit. (drugfree.org, 10/17/18)

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