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

February 2019 Newsletter

Did you Know:

Benzodiazepine Misuse Rises Among Adults

A growing number of U.S. adults are misusing benzodiazepines such as Valium and Xanax, researchers at the University of Michigan have found. In a study published in Psychiatric Services, the researchers report about one in five people who take benzodiazepines are misusing them. Young adults ages 18 to 25 are the most likely to misuse benzodiazepines, the study found. "If you look at younger adults, basically misuse was as common as prescribed use, which obviously is kind of disturbing," lead researcher Donovan Maust told HealthDay. Misuse of the drugs declined with age. Overall use of the drugs among adults is more than twice as high as previously reported, with almost 13 percent of adults using benzodiazepines within the past year. (drugfree.org, 1/3/19)

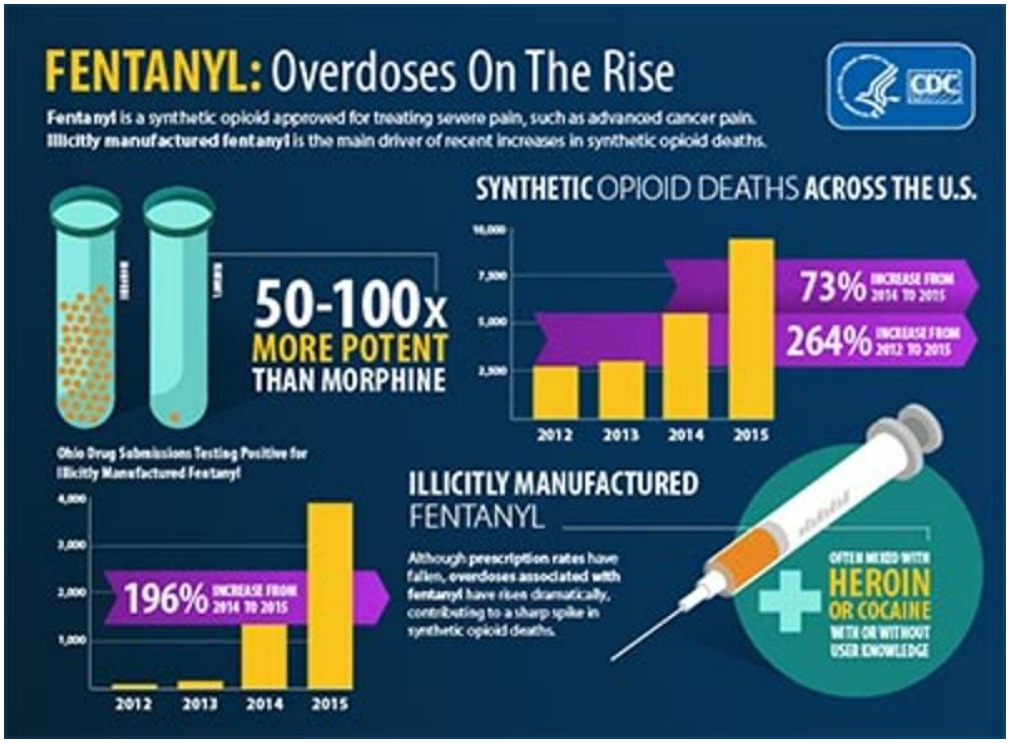
Most people treated in the emergency room for an opioid overdose can safely leave the hospital in as little as one hour after receiving the opioid overdose antidote naloxone, according to a new study. Patients can be released in an hour after treatment if their vital signs including their pulse, blood pressure and breathing are within normal ranges, and if they can walk, the study found. Lead researcher Dr. Brian Clemency of the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at the University at Buffalo, in New York said rules for releasing overdose patients vary among hospitals. Some patients are released immediately, while others are watched for six hours or more, HealthDay reports. His study included 538 patients who arrived by ambulance after receiving naloxone. Patients' vital signs were evaluated one hour after they had received naloxone. They were observed for at least four hours before being discharged. The researchers found most adverse events after receiving naloxone were minor and unlikely to be life-threatening. (drugfree.org, 1/10/19)

Drug overdose deaths among women ages 30 to 64 more than tripled between 1999 and 2017, according to a new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The rate increased from 6.7 deaths per 100,000 people (4,314 deaths total) to 24.3 per 100,000 (18,100 deaths), CBS News reports. The report found large increases in deaths involving fentanyl, heroin and benzodiazepines. "Substantial work has focused on informing women of childbearing age about the risk and benefit of the use of certain drugs, particularly for the risk posed by neonatal abstinence syndrome as a result of opioid use during pregnancy," the researchers wrote. "The current analysis demonstrates the remaining need to consider middle-aged women who remain vulnerable to death by drug overdose." (drugfree.org, 1/17/19)

In Indiana, opioids were involved in almost 63 percent of drug overdose deaths in 2017, a 45 percent increase from 2016. In addition, national rates of overdose deaths involving cocaine and psychostimulants with abuse potential also increased by more than a third in 2017. In Indiana, such rates increased by 112 percent and 139 percent, respectively. (Indiana State Department of Health, 1/8/19)

New smartphone app can detect an opioid overdose

Opioids have the potential to cause rapid cessation of breathing, respiratory failure and death. Most overdose deaths could have been prevented through early detection and timely administration of naloxone, which quickly restores normal respiration to a person whose breathing has slowed or stopped. As such, researchers at the University of Washington developed an app called Second Chance that identifies respiratory depression, apnea and gross motor movements associated with an opioid overdose. If the app detects decreased or absent breathing, it sends an alarm asking the person to interact with it. If the person fails to interact with the app, Second Chance will immediately contact emergency services or a trusted friend or family member who has access to and can administer naloxone. The researchers are applying for approval from the Food and Drug Administration, and they estimate the app will be available in about eight months. (Indiana State Department of Health, 1/22/19)



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