

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

May 2021 Newsletter

## Did you know?

**More than 60% of opioid painkillers prescribed to surgical patients are not used**, according to a new study. In the 21 days after surgery, orthopedic patients took an average of six of 20 prescribed opioid pills. Urology patients took an average of one of seven prescribed pills, [HealthDay](#) reports. The study found 64% of patients said they didn't even use half of their prescription. Just 21% of orthopedic surgery patients and 11% of urology patients asked for a refill a month after their procedure. The researchers say the findings have implications for curbing the opioid epidemic. (drugfree.org, 4/1/21)

**More than half of children and teens with mental health symptoms are not receiving treatment.** The study found that more than half of children and teens with high levels of adverse childhood experiences, such as being exposed to violence, are not receiving mental health treatment, [HealthDay](#) reports. Children and teens of color and those whose parents have lower levels of education are less likely to receive treatment. (drugfree.org, 4/1/21)

**The FDA is calling on the manufacturers of inhalers that contain the nasal decongestant propylhexedrine to make design changes to prevent misuse**, [HealthDay](#) reports. It is sold over the counter under the brand name Bazedrex. Bazedrex inhalers can be legally purchased, but propylhexedrine abuse occurs as people try to find legal ways to get high or increase productivity and concentration. The FDA says the abuse and misuse of the decongestant can lead to complications including fast or abnormal heart rhythm, high blood pressure and paranoia. These complications can lead to hospitalization, disability or death. Propylhexedrine is safe and effective when used as directed. In addition, decreasing the amount of medicine the device contains could also reduce the risk of serious side effects if abused or misused. (drugfree.org, 4/1/21)

**The Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) released its statement of drug policy priorities for the first year of the Biden-Harris Administration.** These priorities will save lives and address the multifaceted challenges presented by the opioid and stimulant epidemics. ONDCP's policy priorities are:

- Expanding** access to evidence-based treatment;
- Advancing** racial equity issues in the approach to drug policy;
- Enhancing** evidence-based harm reduction efforts;
- Supporting** evidence-based prevention efforts to reduce youth substance use;
- Reducing** the supply of illicit substances;
- Advancing** recovery-ready workplaces and expanding the addiction workforce; and
- Expanding** access to recovery support services

**An estimated one in four people with a serious mental illness also face a substance use disorder**, according to a new publication from the Treatment Advocacy Center. This puts them at significantly higher risk of homelessness, involvement with the justice system and physical comorbidities. It is also much more difficult for an individual with these co-occurring

illnesses to get treatment for both disorders. Only about 12.7% of individuals facing multiple disorders reported receiving any treatment. Many individuals' first exposure to treatment is during incarceration, and even then, it is not likely that the treatment will address both illnesses. (Indiana Department of Health, 4/13/21)

**Approximately 20% of Americans suffer from chronic pain**, the CDC reports. Chronic pain is often managed by prescription opioids. To ensure the correct usage of opioids, regular visits with a healthcare provider and high quality of care is important. Also, overdose prevention strategies, such as co-prescribing naloxone to the individual or their family members (or anyone who can administer the naloxone if needed), can help prevent overdoses. Early intervention and refraining from prescribing high dosage opioids for long periods are key to preventing the development of an opioid use disorder. (Indiana Department of Health, 4/13/21)

**Overdose deaths resulting from a dangerous combination of cocaine and opioids are outpacing fatalities linked to cocaine abuse alone**, a new U.S. government report warns. "Much of the increase in the rate of drug overdose deaths involving cocaine in recent years is due to the co-occurrence of opioids," said study author Dr. Holly Hedegaard. A similar trend has started taking hold because of the combined abuse of both methamphetamines and opioids. Starting in 2017, deaths attributed to that pairing started to outpace deaths linked to meth alone. 54% of all meth-related deaths in 2019 also involved opioids. 75.5% of all cocaine-related deaths also involved one or more opioids in 2019. The overall trend seen in the analysis was substantially different across U.S. regions. For example, a pairing of cocaine and opioids accounted for more than 83% of all cocaine-related deaths in the Northeast, but just 63% in the West. Similarly, fatalities due to a combination of meth and opioids made up nearly 80% of meth-related deaths in the Northeast, but just 44% in the West. (ASAM weekly, 4/20/21)

**A New Jersey 12-year-old eats Skittles. A 3-year-old eats Nerds Rope.** A young Massachusetts boy eats candies. Lots of them. All three end up in the hospital because the candies they ate were THC candies. In fact, ER workers found about three grams of THC-- a huge dose -- in the Massachusetts boy. Poison control centers across the nation have seen a spike in the number of children who are ingesting THC-infused goodies, rising from just 19 cases in 2010 before any state legalized recreational marijuana to 554 cases last year. Some 400 of those cases were in youngsters under age 5, children too young to read what's on the labels no matter how many warnings – if any – their packages might contain. Most of the new cases have come from rec legal states. Massachusetts legalized recreational pot in 2018 when there were just 52 such cases. By 2020, that number was 257. Such cases also happen in medical marijuana states, although to a lesser extent. (The Marijuana Report, 3/21/21)

**The DEA has recently seized a large amount of counterfeit pharmaceutical pills in Mexico.** These pills were made to look like prescription drugs, such as Adderall, Percocet, Xanax etc. However, the pills were laced with lethal amounts of fentanyl. The DEA stressed that traffickers are trying to fool casual drug users into buying these "prescription drugs." Traffickers use fentanyl because it is cheaper and easy to make, creating a larger profit for the sellers and makers. As little as 2 milligrams of fentanyl can be fatal for an adult. The DEA warns that any using any non-prescribed pills is extremely dangerous as they have a very high possibility of containing fentanyl. (Indiana Department of Health, 4/27/21)

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