

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

May 2020 Newsletter

## New Resource Available

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) released its “2020 Drugs of Abuse Resource Guide,” designed to be a reliable resource on the most commonly abused and misused drugs in the United States. This comprehensive guide provides important information about the harms and consequences of drug use by describing a drug’s effects on the body and mind, overdose potential, origin, legal status, and other key facts. “Drugs of Abuse” also offers a list of additional drug education and prevention resources, including the DEA websites:

- [www.DEA.gov](http://www.DEA.gov); [www.JustThinkTwice.com](http://www.JustThinkTwice.com), aimed at teenagers;
- [www.GetSmartAboutDrugs.com](http://www.GetSmartAboutDrugs.com), designed for parents, educators, and caregivers;
- [www.CampusDrugPrevention.gov](http://www.CampusDrugPrevention.gov), for higher education; and
- [www.OperationPrevention.com](http://www.OperationPrevention.com) for opioid curricula

## Did You Know?

**Teens and young adults who have family members taking prescription opioids are more than twice as likely to overdose on opioids themselves** compared to their peers without family members taking the medications, according to new research. The overdose risk increased six-fold for young people who were prescribed opioids, and rose 13-fold for those who were prescribed opioids themselves and had a family member with an opioid prescription. The study, published in JAMA Network Open, included health data from more than 45,000 families, including more than 72,000 teens and young adults ages 11 to 26. Prescription opioids are potent medicines that can pose serious health risk to children and teens, if taken accidentally or misused on purpose,” study co-author Dr. Anh P. Nguyen of Kaiser Permanente Colorado’s Institute for Health Research, told UPI. “Parents should control access to these medications in the home.” ([drugfree.org](http://drugfree.org), 4/2/20)

**Patterns and Characteristics of Methamphetamine Use Among Adults – United States, 2015-2018.** A recently published Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) from the CDC said that from 2015 to 2018, an estimate of 1.6 million adults in the United States reported methamphetamine use in the last year with 52.9% having methamphetamine use disorder and 22.3% reporting injection use. However, fewer than one third of adults with methamphetamine use disorder received treatment in the past year. The report found that co-occurring substance use and mental illness were common among those who used methamphetamine. In order to combat these issues, increasing or building state and local prevention and response capacity, expanding linkages to care, and enhancing public health and safety collaborations are necessary. (Indiana State Department of Health, 4/7/2020)

**New app supports individuals in recovery.** To help support individuals in recovery from substance use disorder, Addiction Policy Forum has partnered with CHES Health to launch Connections, a free smartphone app that is scientifically proven to support patients in recovery by reducing relapse and promoting pro-social engagement. With the app, users can track sobriety, access e-therapy to learn new recovery skills, connect with trained counselors and peers through messaging, access clinical support available seven days/week, 9 a.m. -10 p.m. EDT, track a treatment plan and set reminders, journal daily and discover helpful videos, testimonials and more through the unique resource library. Connections is the only available app that is backed by years of research to support its provider-care management functionality, predictive relapse indicators and analytics to reduce relapse. (Indiana State Department of Health, 4/7/2020)

**Marijuana withdrawal is real, study shows.** A new study reveals that nearly half (47 percent) of people who use marijuana regularly and/or heavily experience cannabis withdrawal syndrome when they try to quit. It is widely believed that the drug is not addictive, but this meta-analysis involving 23,500 participants sets that myth to rest. Marijuana withdrawal symptoms include nervousness, anxiety, sleeplessness, depression, restlessness, and irritability. They can also include physical symptoms like stomach pain, shakiness, tremors, sweating, fever, chills, and headaches. Experts have known for some time that marijuana is addictive, but it was confirmed in 2013 when the latest edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)* was published. The manual recognized cannabis withdrawal syndrome as a bona fide disorder. (The Marijuana Report, 4/10/20)

**COVID-19 and vaping.** Dr. Nora Volkow, who heads the National Institute on Drug Abuse, is urging people to stop vaping because of the likelihood it will lead to worse outcomes for people with coronavirus, Kaiser Health News reports. Because the pandemic is so new, there is not enough data to show for certain that vaping increases the risk of worse outcomes, she noted. "We already know for COVID that, with comorbid conditions—particularly those that affect the lungs, the heart, the immune system—[patients] are more likely to have negative outcomes," she said. "One can predict an association. In the meantime, because of the data that already exists, we should be very cautious. The prudent thing is to strongly advise individuals who are vaping to stop." (drugfree.org, 4/30/20)

**COVID – 19 and opioids.** COVID-19 also is especially dangerous for people taking opioids, Dr. Volkow said. "If you get COVID and you are taking opioids, the physiological consequences are going to be much worse. You're not only going to have the effects of the virus itself, but you'll have the depressive effects of opioids in the respiratory system [and] in the brain that lead to much less circulation in the lungs," she said. (drugfree.org, 4/30/20)

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