OPIOID OVERDOSE PREVENTION

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What is an opioid?

- Heroin
- Prescription opioids (licit and illicit use)
  - Hydrocodone (Vicodin)
  - Oxycodone (Oxycontin, Percocet)
  - Hydromorphone (Dilaudid)
  - Morphine
  - Methadone
  - Fentanyl
  - Codeine

- Rx opioids kill at least 3x as many Arizonans as heroin
What is an opioid overdose?

- Opioids attach to receptor sites in brain, slows down body functions

- Respiratory function slows until it fails

- 4 minutes after respiratory failure, permanent brain damage & death

- Fatality usually occurs 1-3 hours after opioid ingestion
Arizona Overdose Crisis

- 2008 – Poisoning deaths surpassed motor vehicle deaths
- 65% increase in overdose deaths in past 15 years
- 1099 fatal overdoses in 2013 – 89% of all poisoning deaths
- 6th highest overdose fatalities in country in 2012
- Hospitalization for unintentional poisoning (94% drug related) cost Arizonans over $272 million in 2013, a 54% increase from 2012
Fatalities: overdose > motor accidents

Figure 2. Poisoning and Drug Overdose Mortality Rates Compared to Motor Vehicle-related Mortality Rates, Arizona Residents, 2003-2013
Who is dying?

Figure 13. Drug Overdose Mortality Rates per 100,000 Residents by Age Group and Sex, Arizona 2013
• Age: 45-54, followed by 55-64
• Race:
  • By age-adjusted rate: Native American and White
  • By number: White (899) and Hispanic (191)
• Counties: Rural
• 2013 counties with highest poisoning death rates, in order: Navajo, Coconino, Yavapai, Mohave, La Paz
Nonfatal overdose

• Among all manners of non-fatal poisoning-related inpatient hospitalization, 94 percent were due to overdoses of a drug or medication

• Hospitalization for unintentional poisoning cost Arizonans over $272 million in 2013, a 54% increase from 2012
4 out of 10

- 2013 Trust For America’s Health scored each state’s “promising strategies” for curbing prescription drug abuse
- Arizona, along with Alabama, Kansas, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Wyoming
- Missouri, Nebraska, South Dakota only states scoring less than AZ
Solutions

• PDMP
• Prescriber and patient education
• Expanding treatment options (1 in 10 Americans with a substance use disorder receives treatment)
  • Medicaid expansion
  • Evidence-based treatment vs. other models
• Harm Reduction
  • Syringe service programs
  • Good Samaritan law
  • Naloxone accessibility
Harm Reduction

- Not using opioids is the greatest defense against overdose. Not a realistic or permanent solution for many.

- **Harm reduction** is a set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with drug use.

- Accepts, for better or worse, that licit and illicit drug use is a part of our world, and works to minimize the harmful effects rather than simply ignore or condemn them; at the same time, harm reduction does not attempt to minimize or ignore the real & sometimes tragic harm and danger associated with licit and illicit drug use.
Treatment

• Opioid Substitution Therapy (OST) – methadone, buprenorphine (suboxone) combined with psychosocial counseling
• OST a more effective treatment than abstinence-based overall
• OST most effective in reducing illicit substance use and overdose deaths
• Oftentimes not accepted by DCS or drug courts
Syringe Service Programs

- Decrease HIV & Hepatitis infections
- Overdose prevention education/naloxone distribution is common
- Opportunities to hear about laced or otherwise strong heroin, patterns of overdoses
- Often a conduit to treatment services
Good Samaritan 911 law

- Heart attack analogy
- Prioritizes saving lives over arrests
- Provides certain protections for the 911 caller and overdose victim – usually protection from possession/paraphernalia arrest/prosecution
- 25 states as of December 2014
- WA study, drug users more likely to call 911
- 58-86% of heroin-related overdoses occur in the company of other people (Am. Journal Pub Health)
- 911 is called only 10-56% of the time (AJPH)
- Recommended by: ONDCP, CDC, AMA, APHA
Naloxone

- How does naloxone reverse an overdose?
- Safe, effective, easy to use
- No side effects
- Proven effective in pre-hospital setting
- Essential for rural communities & those who can’t/won’t call 911
- Used by parents, EMTs, law enforcement, friends, and drug users
Naloxone

- 28 other states (southern Red states, too)
- Co-prescribing
- CDC: over 10,000 successful overdose reversals in 15 years by drug users
- Community programs
- Over the counter in some states
- Is it a barrier to treatment?
- Recommended by ONDCP, AMA, APHA, CDC, SAMHSA
- Why don’t we have this in AZ?
What does AZ need to do?

• Encourage opioid substitution therapy when appropriate

• Law to provide protections for prescribers and administrators → layperson naloxone access

• Good Samaritan 911 law → increased calling for help

• Authorize syringe distribution → provides settings for drug users to learn about overdose prevention

• Destigmatize drug users
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