

Local Health Department Approaches to Opioid Use Prevention and Response: Public Health – Dayton & Montgomery County

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Introduction

Montgomery County, Ohio has been devastated by the opioid crisis and the overwhelming impact it has had on our community. Montgomery County had the highest unintentional drug overdose age-adjusted death rate in Ohio from 2015 to 2017. In 2017, Montgomery County had 566 unintentional drug overdose deaths. The populations most affected include whites, males, ages 35–44 years, and high school or GED graduates. The zip codes most affected include 45417, 45403, and 45410. However, data from 2017 to 2018 revealed certain demographic shifts in overdose death data.

Overdose deaths decreased by 49% from 2017 to 2018. Although the decline shows great progress, that is still twice the number of unintentional drug overdose deaths in 2010. The data demonstrates the need for expanded prevention and response programming in Montgomery County. A great amount of work remains to the number of fatal and non-fatal drug overdoses. [The National Association of County and City Health Officials and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Opioid Project](#) identified five strategies: 1) use the [Community Overdose Action Team \(COAT\)](#) as an inter-agency collaborative working toward collective impact; 2) propose the Levels of Care Initiative for opioids and addiction to major healthcare systems operating in the Montgomery County region; 3) promote the adoption of [Overdose Detection Mapping Application Program \(ODMAP\)](#) across all jurisdictions in the county through key stakeholder engagement; 4) develop linkages to care through outreach to vulnerable populations; and 5) increase public awareness and access to necessary tools for overdose response. The COAT structure will implement the proposed strategies to further reduce the number of drug overdoses in Montgomery County.

Implementation

Targeted Outreach to Montgomery County Service Entities

At a COAT Criminal Justice Branch meeting, a local law enforcement officer expressed concern with the number of drug-related dispatch calls within his jurisdiction, specifically at local businesses. Public Health – Dayton and Montgomery County

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(PHDMC) and the COAT supported this need by developing a strategy related to increasing public awareness and access to necessary tools for overdose response.

As part of this initiative, agency staff will provide targeted educational outreach around drug overdoses and drug safety in businesses. A list of service entities (hotels/motels, gas stations, apartment complexes, restaurants, etc.) in areas with high rates of overdoses and drug activity was obtained from local law enforcement. The Environmental Health Sanitarians at PHDMC will conduct the outreach, as they have experience working with local service entities in their day-to-day work. In addition to the education on overdoses and drug safety, PHDMC will offer each service entity the opportunity for staff to get naloxone training.

The program will also offer service entities [NaloxBox](#), a wall-mount unit to store naloxone at their location for rapid emergency use. Ohio law permits naloxone to be available for administration at service entities, so long as a physician-approved, written protocol is established. PHDMC has had a functioning naloxone protocol for service entities since 2017. Additionally, each law enforcement jurisdiction has received notification of the planned outreach work; some jurisdictions will send an officer to accompany the sanitarian during the visit.

Adoption of ODMAP by Montgomery County First Responders

ODMAP is a drug overdose surveillance tool developed by the Washington/Baltimore High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas ([HIDTA](#)). ODMAP would allow jurisdictions within Montgomery County to capture both fatal and non-fatal overdoses into a shared system, which, in turn, would create for a more comprehensive, real-time view of the overdose crisis in our community. The data in ODMAP would support both public safety and public health efforts. The data inputted can be used to issue spike alerts, can inform outreach efforts, can track trends



in surrounding communities and nationally, and can aid in law enforcement investigations.

The COAT Response Branch has adopted the ODMAP initiative because of its direct interaction with first responders. Additionally, PHDMC identified and hired a contractor who has worked extensively with local law enforcement and emergency responders to lead the ODMAP project within Montgomery County. The process to make ODMAP a possibility has multiple layers. The first step was learning about the existing software each jurisdiction is using and its ability to pull the necessary data into ODMAP. The Senior Criminal Intelligence Analyst with Ohio HIDTA has been a valuable resource throughout this process; providing PHDMC with "[Frequently Asked Questions](#)," informational handouts, and technical assistance.

Additionally, data can be manually put into ODMAP or through an Application Programming Interface that connects current data systems with the ODMAP software. The team is working to determine the best mechanism for data entry jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Following that determination, the contractor will meet with each jurisdiction to promote adoption and use of the software, while promoting its many benefits.

Lessons Learned

Collaboration with key stakeholders is vital to the success of CAP strategies and making progress in reducing the number of drug overdoses in the community. Ensuring the appropriate partners are informed and in support of proposed initiatives allows for greater ease of implementation. By integrating CAP strategies into the already-existing COAT structure, it allows for continuity of initiatives and collaborative action towards achieving them.

The COAT has over 150 organizations and over 200 individuals representing multiple sectors including businesses, private non-profit organizations, governmental agencies, grassroots efforts, hospitals, media, and citizens. Additionally, those in recovery and family members who have lost loved ones to drug addiction are represented in every level of the COAT structure. It is the common agenda, mutually reinforcing activities, shared measurement data to inform initiatives, shared responsibility, and commitment to serve the community in a unified, collaborative manner that will continue to help PHDMC in reducing the number of overdoses.

Reminding stakeholders of common goals and objectives maintains the focus on outcomes and helps to make obstacles feel surmountable. If a resolution is not immediately apparent, such as the incompatibility of the multiple emergency services reporting systems across the county, stakeholders remain engaged in the search for a comprehensive solution that allows them all to achieve the common objectives.

About this Story

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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