



CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

OPIOID WORK GROUP ACCOMPLISHMENTS

UPDATED November 30th, 2019

PREVENTION AND EDUCATION

Communications Strategy

- Created an Opioid Communications Strategy, compiling resources and strategies for project-by-project basis until Community Action Plan is formalized.

Grants for Opioid Prevention Activities

- Received two \$50,000 state grants aimed at opioid prevention activities. The first one-time funding was used to conduct a city-wide Needs Assessment. Alexandrians completed surveys and participated in focus groups to help the Work Group better understand the trends in opioid use and how to prioritize addressing the needs of persons who use opioids. The Work Group received the second grant this year.

Community Events

- Public Health Emergency Management (PHEM) coordinated and organized 14 Medical Reserve Corps volunteers for quarterly Drug Take Back Days (July, October, December, April)
- Environmental Health staff highlighted the opioid issue, and distributed literature, at pre-opening meeting with swimming pool companies in mid-April.
- Work Group was one of 17 local organizations presenting to T.C Williams government students researching policy action issues affecting the community. Opioid Response Coordinator spoke to two classrooms of students working on developing an end of year project related to Opioid Reduction.
- Hosted and livestreamed the Opioid Community Conversation Town Hall in February. Event was publicized through mass distribution of fliers, press releases, social media posts, e-news distribution, the City Calendar and messaged in media interviews.

Educational Material and Publications

- Environmental Health staff highlighted the opioid issue, and distributed literature, at pre-opening meeting with swimming pool companies in mid-April.
- Opioid Work Group Logo designed
- Development and City-wide distribution of educational poster describing how to recognize and respond to an overdose. Additionally, the poster provided education on the availability of Narcan.
- Development of a half-size flyer describing how to respond to an overdose and the availability of Narcan. This flyer was distributed to restaurants throughout the City.
- Online information created, including a local website that is continually updated and expanded. The Work Group is also working with regional partners to develop a regional website.
- Substance Use Treatment cards with treatment contact information being used by Alexandria Police Department (APD), Inova Alexandria Hospital, etc.
- A rack card with information of how to dispose of unused medications created for distribution in funeral homes.
- Educational packets designed by the Health Department and distributed to prescribers include details on the opioid crisis, safe opioid prescribing practices, and Alexandria resources for persons with substance use disorders. To date, the packets have been distributed to over 69 providers.

Integration with SAPCA

- Added prescription drug and opioid prevention to the Action Plan.
- Prescription drugs and opioids highlighted in facts and consequences workshops and wreckED workshops provided to middle and high school students (both public and private).
- Purchased permanent drug take back box for Neighborhood Pharmacy in Del Ray, which is accessible for dropping off unused and unneeded drugs during the pharmacy's regular operating hours. The Ribbon Cutting for the box was held on January 5, 2018, and has been fully operational since then. As of June 1st 2018 120lbs of unused and expired medications have been collected.

- Continues co-sponsorship of quarterly Prescription Drug Take Back Days. Recently held on October 28, 2017, January 6, 2018 and April 28, 2018. Between September 2010 and April 2018, 4,975 pounds of unused and expired medications have been collected at these events.

Media

- The Work Group issued a news release related to International Overdose Awareness Day at the end of August
- Regular social media posts are being issued by the City to remind residents of permanent prescription medication drop box locations around Alexandria.
- Press releases distributed prior to events and during overdose spikes.
- Interviews with media resulted in stories on opioid use appearing in local papers, city publications and television news.
- Public Information Officers from the City, Department of Community and Human Services, APD and Sheriff cooperating to push-out materials related to the crisis.

APD Diversion Efforts

- Increased efforts to divert addicted persons into treatment.
- Educating all sworn staff on opioid addiction
- Developed a practice of not charging overdose victims in most circumstances and informing persons in need of treatment about services and how to get help.

Other Efforts

- Overdose Spike Alert Response developed, including a public health emergency flier and a media plan to raise community awareness and prevention efforts.
- Health Department and DCHS medical staff trained. All Health Department public health nurses are trained to counsel anyone regarding opioid overdoses, how to activate the emergency response system and to administer Narcan. All medical staff from DCHS substance use treatment programs are trained in how to administer Narcan.

ADDICTION TREATMENT

Opioid Treatment Program

- Expanded capacity by adding two additional therapists.
- Persons misusing opioids are prioritized for admission to DCHS treatment services.
- Intakes into the Opioid Treatment Program have been streamlined to allow for faster and easier admission of anyone in need.
- Clients enrolled in the Opioid Treatment Program offered training in the use of Narcan.

Detention Center

- Staff began REVIVE! trainings for inmates, which includes giving Narcan at release to persons who have completed the training. First training was April 26, 2018.
- Staff formed the Sheriff's Office Opioid Work Group. This group is investigating opioid treatment services being used in other jails, including Medication Assisted Treatment.

Other

- DCHS staff is pursuing the certification process to be able to store Narcan on-site and provide it to clients who are engaged in treatment programs.
- Alexandria Health Department has asked the Virginia Department of Health for an analysis of sub-jurisdictional areas to determine if Alexandria qualifies for a needle exchange program.

OVERDOSE RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

Narcan Distribution

- Narcan is being provided to clients via Mill Rd MAT Clinic and ARTC.
- Health Department offers free Narcan to Alexandrians at all locations. Since January 1st, 2016, Health Department staff have dispensed 722 Narcan kits (16 of which have been refills).
- APD Vice/Narcotics and K-9 units now carry Narcan.
- Jail Medical staff now store Narcan in case of an inmate overdoses or staff exposure.
- City EMS staff worked with Office of EMS/Virginia Department of Health to change the regulations to make it easier for EMS agencies to store, transport and administer Narcan in the field.
- City EMS staff secured a grant for Narcan to be carried on all engines and ladder trucks, which are first responders to critical calls.

REVIVE! Trainings

- PHEM arranged for 17 Medical Reserve Corps Volunteers to undergo Revive Training in February. PHEM is in the progress of arranging for MRC volunteers to become Revive trainers.
- Eighteen community REVIVE! trainings have been held, which included dispensing Narcan and providing medication disposal kits to attendees. Trainings were provided to Northern Virginia school nurses, Carpenter's Shelter, Al-Anon, Medical Reserve Corp volunteers and ARHA.
- DCHS programs are providing REVIVE! trainings and Naloxone to clients and staff. Clients being treated for substance use disorders are receiving targeted trainings.
- Sheriff staff trained and additional staff trained as REVIVE trainers.
- Additional staff throughout the City received the training.

Overdose Response

- Development of the Recovery Bag Program. Detectives are delivering a Recovery Bag to every surviving OD victim. The Recovery Bag contains information on treatment resources and a temporary cell phone with the numbers to treatment, ARTC, and the detective working their case all pre plugged in. This creates a direct link for treatment outreach in the most critical time period.
- APD now responds to every opioid overdose, in conjunction with EMS.
- Detectives refer clients to treatment and share names of overdose victims with DCHS staff, who then contact these persons to offer treatment services.
- Inova Alexandria Hospital provides substance use assessments to persons at risk and refers these persons to treatment.
- City-wide outreach to victims of opioid overdoses in 2017 occurred in March 2018.

Overdose Spike Response Plan

- Public health emergency press releases and flyers are distributed during any overdose spike incidents.

Law Enforcement Safety Precautions

- Sheriff staff trained on exposure via roll call trainings.
- Sheriff booking staff began using impermeable gloves for searches of inmates and inmate property.
- APD has limited field testing of substances due to safety concerns. They have also purchased covered, hooded testing devices to be used in cases where field testing is necessary.

DIVERSION OF ADDICTED PERSONS INTO TREATMENT

Treatment Court

- Treatment Court personnel participated in a three day intensive training to develop the forms needed for program launch. Treatment Court obtained state approval for the program, and announced an August 1st launch date.
- The Work Group formed a subgroup—led by APD, Probation and Parole and Commonwealth’s Attorney’s Office—to explore the feasibility of opening a Treatment Court in Alexandria. Significant research was conducted and data gathered.
- A Treatment Court Steering Committee was created to explore how to begin such a program in Alexandria.
- The Treatment Court Steering Committee applied for a Federal grant to develop and manage the Treatment Court.
- Three steering committee members attended the National Drug Court conference in May.

APD Efforts

- Developed a practice of not charging overdose victims in most circumstances.
- Vice/Narcotics conducting roll call trainings to all staff on the opioid crisis
- Briefed the CAT 21 committee on opioid crisis.

Crisis Intervention Team

- Trainings now include information on the opioid crisis.

SUPPLY REDUCTION AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

HIDTA Overdose Map

- All opioid overdoses are now being tracked via the HIDTA OD Map, allowing for real-time monitoring of the crisis.
- Alerts to staff when a spike occurs locally or nearby.

Join Operation Purple Rain

- Resulted in the dismantling of a multi-state heroin distribution organization.

Investigating Distribution Organizations

- APD Vice/Narcotics continues to focus investigations on opioid distribution organizations.