

Healthcare Team Project



**OPIATE/HEROIN ABUSE
AWARENESS PROJECT BY
THE VERY BEST CLASS
2016**

Healthcare Team Project



Project Team

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Regional Issue: Opiate/Heroin Abuse

- The LSM Class of 2015 states “opiate abuse has increased substantially in recent years.
- Data shows that treatment for prescription opioid use in St. Mary’s increased 400% and 203% for heroin treatment from 2008 to 2012. Heroin related deaths in Southern Maryland have also increased 53% for people ranging in age from 15-24 and 59% for ages 35-44” (LSM, 2015).

Reference:

Leadership Southern Maryland. (2015, May 1). Leadership Southern Maryland Connections; Class Project 2015.

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Project Summary

- The Healthcare Team of 2016 decided to create awareness of the potential dangers at the point of entry where prescriptions reach patients.
- This would be achieved by creating an informational palm card to be distributed at hospitals, doctors offices and pharmacies in the tri-county area. The message focus is to alert patients to the proper and in-proper uses of highly addictive opioid prescriptions.

Collaborators

- LSM Class of 2016
- Calvert Memorial Hospital (*Susan Dohony, LSM Alumni*)
- Calvert Physician Associates
- Calvert Alliance Against Substance Abuse
- Calvert Substance Abuse Service
- Calvert County Health Department
- MedStar St. Mary's Hospital (*Holly Meyer, LSM Alumni*)
- University of Maryland Charles Regional Hospital (*Joyce Riggs, LSM Alumni*)
- Tri-County Memory Walk
- Project Echo

Potential future partners:

- Walgreens; CVS; additional physician practices

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Timeline

Month	Phase	Activity
Sept. 2015 to Feb. 2016	Research and Discovery	Conversations included leadership at tri-county hospitals, law enforcement, health departments, and drug treatment facilities and advocates.
March 2016	Design and Development	Draft palm card design; language
April 2016	Stakeholder Validation	Circulate draft documents for input from supporting agencies/organizations
May 2016	Distribution	Pilot distribution began in Calvert ER May 1.

Sustainability Plan

Under the ACA hospitals are now motivated to invest in prevention as part of their mission to the community. The continued production and distribution of the palm card and ability to update information can be acquired by these agencies.

Future LSM classes can make a plan to distribute the palm card statewide and beyond.

Future LSM classes can create interviews for public access channels as a promotion of the messaging on the palm card to further awareness.

Additional Outreach

The project inspired additional ideas among stakeholder groups including:

Series of quarterly awareness articles in local hospital magazines and online

Posters for physician exam rooms featuring same message as palm card

USE CAUTION

This prescription is for an opioid-based narcotic. While useful for treating some types of short term pain, this type of medication can be addictive if its use is not carefully monitored.

In addition, it should be kept secure and unused portions should be dropped off at one of the authorized narcotic disposal locations listed below. Proper care and disposal of this medication can prevent it from falling into the wrong hands. Prescription drug abuse is a leading cause of heroin addiction in the US.

DROP OFF LOCATIONS:
Calvert County: 24-hour drop boxes are available at the Sheriff's Department and Maryland State Police Barracks in Prince Frederick.
Charles County: 24-hour drop off at the La Plata and Waldorf Sheriff's Stations; by appointment at Bryans Road
St. Mary's County: 24-hour drop box at the Sheriff's Office in Leonardtown

Warning Signs of Addiction

If you use prescribed opioid pain medications for a short time while being properly monitored by your physician, it's unlikely that you'll have a problem. But some people do become addicted. Here are some warning signs to be aware of, for yourself and your loved ones:

- Increasing your usage/dosage over time, or continuing to use opioids after your medical condition has improved
- Personality changes, including shifts in energy, mood and concentration
- Withdrawal from family, friends, and other social interaction
- Visiting multiple doctors to obtain additional prescriptions
- Changes in appearance and sleeping and eating habits
- Deterioration of school/work performance
- Defensiveness and lashing out at simple requests or questions.
- Increased need to borrow money
- Presence of paraphernalia such as spoons, razor blades, mirrors, disassembled ballpoint pens, soda cans and bottles with holes punched in them

This Opioid Awareness Campaign is Supported by:
 Leadership Southern Maryland Class of 2016
 Calvert Alliance Against Substance Abuse
 Calvert Memorial Hospital
 MedStar St. Mary's Hospital
 Tri-County Memory Walk

Above: Palm card being distributed with new prescriptions

TRENDS TODAY

Opioid Medication Risks Prompt New Guidelines

The potential dangers of opioid prescription medications – like physical dependence, addiction and abuse by young adults – has generated increased scrutiny and recently prompted the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to issue new guidelines for their use.

Although opioids such as hydrocodone, Oxycodone, Oxycodone/acetaminophen and Vicodin are powerful pain relievers, they carry significant risks for many people. For this reason, it's important for pain patients, parents and community members to take just as much care about these medications as they do about their use.

People can become physically dependent on opioids and have difficulty controlling its longer-term use without abrupt cessation of all opioids. But some patients may even become addicted to them – repeatedly seeking or taking a medication even though they exhibit the clear evidence of dangerous physical symptoms or behaviors.

Across their lifetimes, some adults who start taking opioid medications for moderate or severe pain may end up using them long-term. The number of prescriptions and young adults using these medications is growing steadily increasing – another often cited contributing factor to the opioid crisis.

Oxycodone is not the only risk related to prescription opioids. Misuse, abuse, and opioid use disorder (addiction) are also potential dangers.

As these trends continue, there are more than 100 million prescriptions for these medications that are written every day.

The same people with particular opioid medication needs can be at a higher risk of addiction, but they are also more likely to receive appropriate treatment and care. Many people with particular opioid medication needs can be at a higher risk of addiction, but they are also more likely to receive appropriate treatment and care.

What Are Opioid Medications Used For?
 Opioid medications are used to relieve moderate to severe pain. They are also used to relieve moderate to severe pain.

Using Opioid Medications Safely and Effectively
 It's important that you use your opioid medication exactly as your doctor has prescribed. Do not take more than your doctor has prescribed. Do not take more than your doctor has prescribed.

At right: First in series of opioid articles in local hospital magazine. Story inspired by the project.