

Groups use International Overdose Awareness Day to raise the alarm about the rise of fentanyl overdoses

Community organizations vow to collaborate to increase their drug prevention efforts to reverse soaring overdose trends

WASHINGTON, DC, USA, September 2, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- After drug overdose deaths soared to 93,331 nationwide in 2020, two community organizations in Washington, DC, recognized International Overdose Awareness Day by remembering those who have lost their lives to drug overdoses and vowing to collaborate on drug education and activities to prevent future tragedies of this kind.



Foundation for a Drug-Free World materials are available for free to groups working on prevention

The [Foundation for a Drug-Free World](#) and [Hillcrest Children and Family Center](#) first shared their outreach programs strategies and then vowed to work together to bring education and

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*Ms. Thalia Ghiglia,
Foundation for a Drug-Free
World faith liaison.*

increased awareness to the community. The Foundation for a Drug-Free World will provide its award-winning informational materials, videos, and speakers to help in educational programs with youth served by Hillcrest.

“We must all step up our efforts to solve the overdose problem. It is a multicultural issue involving not only the substance abuser but his family and the community. No one organization can solve the problem alone. Together we can make a difference so in future years we will not need an International Overdose Awareness Day,” said Ms. Thalia Ghiglia, Foundation for a Drug-Free World faith liaison.

Drug overdoses have been soaring the last few years partly because increasingly various drugs, not just heroin, are being laced with fentanyl, a powerful synthetic opioid that is similar to morphine but is 50 to 100 times more potent.

Synthetic opioids, including fentanyl, are now the most common drugs involved in drug overdose deaths in the United States. In 2017, 59.8 percent of opioid-related deaths involved fentanyl, compared to 14.3 percent in 2010.



Rev. Susan Taylor briefing Hillcrest Children & Family Center staff on materials available to help with drug education

The US deaths from drug overdoses in 2020, a record high, represented the sharpest annual increase in at least three decades. In comparison, there was an estimated death toll of 72,151 in 2019, according to provisional [overdose-drug data](#) released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

As opioid-related deaths continue to rise across the nation, Washington, DC, also experienced an alarming increase in fatal opioid overdoses. Overdose deaths hit the first peak in 2017, with 279 deaths, and declined in 2018 when DC began implementation of an organized effort to combat the issue. In 2019, fatalities returned to the 2017 levels, but hit an all-time high in 2020.

The increase in overdoses throughout the US and in Washington, DC, are almost all connected to fentanyl being mixed with different drugs including cocaine, methamphetamines, heroin, and even marijuana. This creates a problem for health care providers who may not realize they are dealing with a fentanyl related overdose when the patient says they only took cocaine or smoked marijuana.

To battle this problem, organizations are working together to educate youth to prevent them from abusing drugs and overdosing.

Hillcrest, a health care provider, has a rich history dating back to 1815, and has evolved to serving the underprivileged in the Washington, DC, community with a wide array of outreach programs and services for youth and adults. They are on the front lines dealing with overdoses and the exploding fentanyl problem.

The Foundation for a Drug-Free World's Truth About Drugs program is one of the world's largest non-governmental drug education and prevention campaigns. Evidence-based studies have

shown that when young people are provided with true information about drugs, usage rates drop.

Drug-Free World offers all its educational materials for free. Materials can be ordered at www.drugfreeworld.org. The Foundation for a Drug-Free World is an international organization with materials in 22 languages.

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