

# Moms With Loved Ones Lost To Overdose Call For Prioritizing Health-Based Solutions To Save Lives

*For Mother's Day, moms urged elected officials to expand access to lifesaving overdose prevention & treatment services, and halt wave of harmful drug laws*

NEW YORK , NY, UNITED STATES, May 13, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Press Conference  
Featured Mothers Nationwide Who Have Lost Family to Overdose

The logo for 'Broken No More', with the word 'broken' in a red, distressed, hand-painted font and 'NO MORE' in a bold, blue, sans-serif font below it.

The urgency of the overdose crisis is starkly evident in the nearly 90,000 lives lost in the United States last year. This crisis, while impacting all communities, is particularly devastating in Black and Native communities, where overdose deaths are rising most rapidly. On the eve of Mother's Day, moms who have lost loved ones to

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Get Naloxone, put it in the car, and put it in your home. Don't wait until [an overdose] happens, and then try to learn how to use Naloxone. Educate yourself now,”

*Anita Garrett*

overdose urged lawmakers to prioritize health-based solutions that prevent overdoses and to halt the wave of harsh drug laws that they say will not reduce overdose deaths but will instead fill prisons without helping those struggling with substance use disorder.

The May 7th press conference featured moms from across the United States who have lost loved ones to overdose. View the virtual press conference [HERE](#).

“I have spent the last 13 Mother's Days missing a piece of my heart,” said Tamara Olt, M.D., Executive Director of Broken No More, an organization that helps thousands of mothers through the grief of overdose loss. “My 16-year-old son, Joshua, died of a heroin overdose on April 29th, 2012...I believe that taking a public health approach that seeks to support, not punish, people who use drugs is crucial to ending the overdose crisis.” The personal experiences of these mothers underscore the human cost of the overdose crisis, making their advocacy all the more compelling.

Further, Olt added: “We must expand access to evidence-based strategies that are proven to save lives. This includes medications for opiate use disorder by making them more widely available, increasing harm reduction and addiction services, distributing naloxone, and providing evidence-based drug education for young adults.”

The mothers' call-to-action is for lawmakers to embrace life-affirming, evidence-based health responses proven to save lives and prevent other families from experiencing the devastating loss of those they love. This event was organized by Broken No More, with support from sister organization Grief Recovery After Substance Passing (GRASP).



Kim and Bryce in happier times.

During the moving press conference, bereaved mothers shared their stories and advocated for proven investments in health alternatives that can save lives.

“Get Naloxone, put it in the car, and put it in your home. Don't wait until [an overdose] happens, and then try to learn how to use Naloxone. Educate yourself now,” said Anita Garrett, a Milwaukee advocate who lost her 31-year-old son, Sammie. “Fourteen years later, I'm still hurting, but that's not going to stop me from trying to help save another parent from going through what I went through...I'm here today to speak for my son, to speak for so many others who lost loved ones. That's also why I joined the “You Have the Power to Save Lives” campaign.”

Here is a [powerful video](#) that features Anita Garrett for the “You Have the Power to Save Lives” campaign. The campaign raises awareness of overdose-reversing naloxone, an easy-to-use nasal spray medication. It has partnered with community groups and local governments to increase the availability of free naloxone, especially in Black communities.

The speakers implored lawmakers to stand firm against attempts to double down on the punitive policies of criminalization and prosecution as a response to the overdose crisis. Even though people of all races and ethnicities use and sell drugs at similar rates, Black people, communities of color, and poor people are disproportionately harmed due to targeted enforcement.

“Some communities are seeing overdose deaths decline because of harm reduction, but Black and Indigenous communities are being left behind. We face barriers to accessing those lifesaving tools,” said Kimberly Douglas, Founder of Black Moms Against Overdose, a support group for

moms who have lost children to overdose. Kimberly lost her 17-year-old son, Bryce, to an overdose. "Criminalizing people struggling with substance use only fuels our prisons and fuels more overdoses, especially in communities of color. That's not justice."

Cara Wykowski, who lost her 31-year-old son, Eric, to an overdose, said: "People are going to use drugs. That's an undeniable truth. Instead of relying on fear-based tactics and rhetoric, we must prioritize education that empowers individuals and communities. Laws often weaponize grieving families, seeking retribution only to further stigmatize those with chronic drug use."

Sarah Couper, PMHPN-BC, who lost her 19-year-old son, Maxwell, to an overdose, said: "I think that as long as we all continue voicing and speaking about what's happened to our children, we can reach people. We can break the stigma and break the judgment with continuing on these stories."

In November 2024, [Broken No More released testimonial videos](#) sharing families' love, pain, and loss, and explaining why they support health solutions to the overdose crisis. The videos end with the message, "Families Support Harm Reduction, Not Prison. Say Yes to Policies that Work." This compilation video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fYeZvivs3AY>) features Dianne Carden Glenn from ekiM for Change, Joy Rucker from the Black Harm Reduction Network, and Susan Ousterman from the Vilomah Foundation.

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About Broken No More

Broken No More is an organization formed by families and friends of those suffering from a substance use disorder. We have lived the trauma of addiction with our loved ones, and we have experienced the devastating effects caused by the drug policies of prohibition and criminalization. Far too many of us have experienced the loss of a loved one from overdose because of these policies. Broken No More was formed with the mission of supporting and promoting more enlightened drug policies that will reduce the stigma of drug use and keep other parents and family members from losing the one they love to overdose. Through the formation of its Advocacy Group, Broken No More has increased its ability to respond to punitive policy proposals.

Learn more at [broken-no-more.org](https://broken-no-more.org).

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