

NCHE Cites Importance of New Campaign Addressing Drug Overdose Crisis In Black Communities

The You Have the Power to Save Lives campaign is increasing access to naloxone and empowering Black communities with the knowledge and tools to save lives

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, May 28, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The National Collaborative for Health Equity, a non-profit organization

committed to achieving health equity for all, cited the importance of the You Have the Power to Save Lives (<http://www.youcansavelives.org/>). With drug overdose deaths at a crisis level, the campaign provides greater access to naloxone, an overdose-reversing medicine, in Black communities.

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Dr. Gail C. Christopher, Executive Director at the National Collaborative for Health Equity (NCHE), said that the disproportionate number of Black overdose deaths across the United States is a barrier to the NCHE's mission of achieving health equity.

[Black overdose rates surpassed whites in 2020](#) and have surged over the last five years. [A study](#) by the O'Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law found that in

22 of 25 states, Black communities suffered higher fatal overdose rates than white populations. While overall [drug overdoses declined by 27% in 2024](#), Black men, ages 31 to 47, are projected to experience a doubling in overdose deaths from 2020 to 2025 (<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10299749/#sec0006>). In many cities, older Black men are four times more likely to die of overdose than other men in their age group. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/30/upshot/black-men-overdose-deaths.html>)



“As an organization, we provide data, tools, and resources to help leaders from historically

marginalized and excluded communities improve the conditions that shape health,” said Dr. Christopher, a former Senior Advisor and Vice President of the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. “When communities don’t have equal access to life-saving medicine, such as naloxone, that can prevent overdose deaths, access must be increased to save lives. NCHE is committed to addressing the deep racial and ethnic health inequities that persist largely due to structural and institutional racism and exclusion.”

Public health experts note that the increased availability of naloxone has played a role in the overall decline in overdose deaths. The life-saving medication reverses the effects of an opioid-related overdose within minutes. Opioids relieve pain by attaching and activating specific receptors in the brain. Naloxone reverses opioid overdoses by blocking the receptors and preventing opioids from attaching.



Dr. Gail C. Christopher

“NCHE expresses support for the You Have the Power to Save Lives campaign and all efforts to reduce overdose deaths in the Black community,” said Dr. Christopher.

Sponsored by Vital Strategies, a highly respected public health organization, the "You Have the Power to Save Lives" campaign has made significant strides in seven cities: Louisville, KY; Durham, NC; Milwaukee, WI; Newark, NJ; Albuquerque, NM; Philadelphia, PA; and Detroit, MI. Working with community groups, health organizations, and local government, the campaign has established free naloxone distribution points in Black neighborhoods, including firehouses, neighborhood gathering spaces, and community health providers.

The campaign is increasing access to naloxone and empowering communities with the knowledge and tools to save lives. It educates communities about the benefits of naloxone, removes the stigma associated with carrying naloxone, and, most importantly, empowers individuals to take action and save lives in the event of an overdose. The campaign inspires and motivates positive changes that can save lives.

At the heart of the campaign is a new website –YouCanSaveLives.org – where people from the target cities can find out where to get naloxone near them, hear powerful, real-world testimonials, and take action to spread the word about the importance of naloxone. In addition to increasing access to naloxone, the campaign is also educating communities about the benefits of naloxone, helping to remove the stigma around carrying naloxone, and empowering

individuals to save lives in the event of an overdose.

Health-related data plays a critical role in identifying racial and ethnic disparities in overdose deaths and other health determinants that gauge progress toward health equity for all. This data is not just numbers and statistics; it's information that informs and empowers us all.

A recent study from the Pennsylvania Department of Health found that Black people who died from opioid overdoses were half as likely as white people to receive naloxone, which is also known by its brand name Narcan. Further, a University of Minnesota School of Public Health study (<https://www.sph.umn.edu/news/equity-based-naloxone-distribution-can-save-lives-while-reducing-health-disparities/>) determined that an equity-focused distribution approach of naloxone achieved higher reductions in overdose deaths for Black and Hispanic populations.

With some health and racial data now under threat or no longer being funded, Dr. Christopher emphasized the broad benefits of data collection. "To build a society where all Americans can live their healthiest and most vibrant lives free from discrimination, everyone needs to be seen," she said. "Being seen requires being recognized, being heard, and having your needs met, regardless of your race or ethnicity. This is pivotal to dismantling structural racism. And it starts with having good data that fully reflects America's diversity."

She called for the continued collection, distribution, and sharing of health-related data, as well as the work that utilizes this data to further health equity.

"America must continue to produce data that spurs initiatives and campaigns like the You Have the Power to Save Lives campaign," she said. "We need data to create health equity and an environment where everyone can thrive in our society."

About the National Collaborative for Health Equity

Founded in 2014, NCHE was established to promote health equity through action, leadership, inclusion, and collaboration. We work to create environments that foster the best possible health outcomes for all populations, regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or nativity. NCHE also works to improve conditions for health and well-being, including housing, education, income and wealth, and the physical and social environment. Further, we must address historical and contemporary structural, institutional, and interpersonal racism, which fuels inequities in our society.

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