

Addressing the Opioid Crisis

ISSUE #1. April 2021



The Genesis of COAST

By Sheila Murphy, COAST Grant Administrator

In October 2018, the Ventura County Behavioral Health Department was notified that its application to the Comprehensive Opioid Abuse Site-based Program; federal funding provided by the U.S. Department of Justice to combat opioid misuse, had been granted. The amount of the award was \$935,401, and just under the \$1 million maximum. It was the largest award of two California county grants in the category.

Since that time, the COAST Program - County Opioid Abuse Suppression Taskforce - has worked diligently to address opioid abuse in Ventura County. Working with the stakeholders in this effort - the Ventura County Sheriff's Office, Ventura County Medical Examiner's Office, the Ventura County Public Health Department, and Ventura County EMS, the COAST Program has analyzed trends and targeted efforts to reduce local impacts.

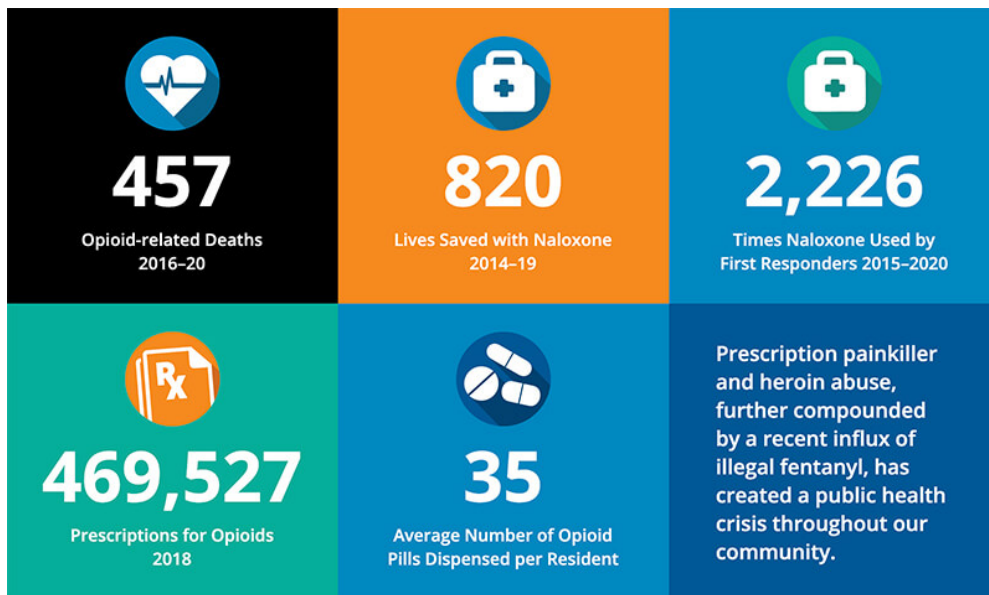
The Program has produced a training video for law enforcement, *The Medical Examiner Do's & Don'ts for Drug Overdose Cases*, which rolled out across the Sheriff's office and is now being introduced to all Ventura County Police departments.

A public-facing data dashboard has been published to the www.coastventuracounty.org website, to inform the public on important data such as opioid-related deaths over a five-year period (2016-2020), Lives Saved with Naloxone (2014-2019), and Prescriptions for Opioids in the year 2018, among others. The dashboard will be updated annually.

The real genesis of the COAST Grant was the Ventura County Rx Abuse & Heroin Workgroup, created within Behavioral Health in 2012, in response to the then emerging trend of drug diversion and so-called "doctor shopping," where opioid-involved drug users

seek out willing doctors to provide strong painkillers that patients can use or sell illegally on the street.

For the past decade, more American have died from drug overdoses than any kind of accidental death - more than traffic accidents and gun violence - according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention. In Ventura County, more than 100 accidental deaths each year are attributed to drug overdose, with the majority involving powerful opioids. The COAST Grant works to reverse this trend.



Data Dashboard offers a Snapshot of the Opioid Epidemic in Ventura County

By Brad Friday, COAST Implementation Coordinator

The County Opioid Abuse Suppression Taskforce (COAST), in partnership with multiple agencies across the county, has developed a dashboard that is available for the public to view at

www.coastventuracounty.org. This is a one stop, data-driven display of current statistics and services related to the

opioid crisis that are available to the community. This includes statistics that track opioid-related overdoses, deaths, Naloxone (Narcan) administration, medication drop-off locations, syringe exchange locations, and treatment facilities across our scope of care.



The COAST project is also collaborating with our aforementioned partners and design engineers to create an interactive “Internal-Facing Dashboard.” This dashboard will be made available to decision makers, policy creators, prevention and treatment specialists within the Ventura County Health Care Agency and Sheriff’s Office. Current and timely data displayed in an interactive format for our leaders will enhance the overall capability and efficiency of opioid response, with the goal of reducing the number of overdoses and overdose deaths within the county.

Learn more:

Opioid Data Dashboard, COAST Ventura County

www.coastventuracounty.org



Legislative Update: Purdue Pharma to use public trusts, Sackler cash to settle opioid litigation

Purdue Pharma LP filed a bankruptcy plan on March 15th, that would resolve thousands of opioid lawsuits by restructuring the OxyContin maker into an entity that would steer profits to plaintiffs and require the company’s Sackler family owners to contribute nearly \$4.3 billion to the settlement.

The plan is intended to serve as Purdue’s roadmap out of bankruptcy, which it filed in September 2019, in the face of nearly 3,000 lawsuits accusing the company of fueling the national opioid crisis through deceptive marketing. The plan, which Purdue says is worth more than \$10 billion, sets up trusts that would indirectly control the new entity to distribute money to states, local governments and tribal organizations for opioid abatement programs.

The Sacklers’ contributions would be paid out over nine years. The plan also establishes trusts to pay out to private entities and individuals that have brought opioid-related lawsuits against Purdue, such as hospitals, insurance carriers and legal guardians of children born with addiction-related issues. The various trusts would be funded with an initial cash infusion of \$500 million immediately after the company emerges from bankruptcy and another \$1 billion generated from the new entity’s assets and operations through 2024. The trusts would also receive funding from the Sacklers’ contribution.

The new entity will be overseen by a board comprising independent managers selected by states and local governments

in consultation with Purdue and its unsecured creditors' committee. The Sacklers will not be part of that selection process. Purdue said the new entity will not promote opioid products to healthcare providers.

Additionally, the plan would create a publicly available repository for documents related to the government's investigation into alleged misconduct in the marketing of opioids, which would become available once the plan is approved in bankruptcy court. Purdue initially had support from about half of the U.S. states and other governmental entities for its proposed settlement. Many other states have opposed Purdue's plan, taking issue with the public trust arrangement and the size of the initial \$3 billion contribution from the Sacklers, which they said should be larger.

By Maria Chutchian and Mike Spector - Reuters



News: Overdose Deaths In Ventura County Spiked In 2020, Largely Due To Fentanyl

Ventura County saw a spike in overdose deaths in 2020, driven largely by a powerful synthetic opioid, a new report shows. Fatal overdoses reached 217 in 2020, a jump of more than 45% compared to the prior year, according to an annual report from the Ventura County Medical Examiner's Office.

"A few years ago, when there were reports about fentanyl in other parts of the country, we weren't seeing that many deaths from it here in Ventura County," said Dr. Christopher Young, the county's chief medical examiner. "This is a dangerous drug that's in our community and causing these deaths," Young said.

Source: Ventura County Star

SPECIAL REPORT: 2020 FATAL OVERDOSES

Noteworthy trends:

- Total overdose deaths between 2019 and 2020 increased by 68 (45.6% increase). Compared to the previous year, accidental overdoses for 2020 increased by 75 while suicidal overdoses decreased by 5.
- Fentanyl and benzodiazepine deaths increased significantly in 2020 compared to 2019. Fentanyl contributed to 54 more deaths than the previous year. Benzodiazepines contributed to 34 more deaths than the previous year.
- The highest number of overdose deaths in 2020 were between ages 31 to 40 years (49 deaths) and of these deaths, 24 involved fentanyl.

Learn more:

[Overdose deaths in Ventura County spiked in 2020, largely due to fentanyl](#), Ventura County Star, March 3, 2021

[Special Report: 2020 Fatal Overdoses](#), County of Ventura, Medical Examiner's Office

Opioid Data Dashboard, COAST Ventura County
www.coastventuracounty.org



Opioid Overdose Response Training Course Launches on Ventura County Responds

COULD SOMEONE YOU CARE ABOUT OVERDOSE?

If a loved one or someone you know may be at risk of an overdose, call us about getting an Overdose Rescue Kit. If you are eligible for a kit, we will train you online on how to use naloxone (also known by its brand name, Narcan®). You will then be instructed on how to pick up a kit by appointment at one of our VCBH locations.

Call about a Rescue Kit at (805) 667-6663.



**NO
OD**

**Could someone
you care about
overdose?**

**Call about a
Rescue Kit:
1-805-667-6663**
Confidential • Free

OPIOID RESPONSE TRAINING

What you will learn:

- Overview of the national and local opioid crisis
- Learn the risk of overdose from opioids, both prescription and illicit drugs
- Learn how to recognize an opioid overdose
- Learn step-by-step instructions on how to respond effectively to an opioid overdose
- Access resources to obtain a free overdose rescue kit
- No cost training

[See the Opioid Overdose Response Training Course](#)

Ventura County Responds
www.venturacountyresponds.org



National Prescription Drug Take Back Day April 24, 2021, 10am - 2pm

Ventura County is committed to preventing prescription drug misuse and abuse. One of the ways the county works to address the issue locally is by reducing access, especially to teens.

The Ventura County Sheriff's Office in collaboration with Ventura County Behavioral Health established a countywide Rx disposal program that allows residents to safely dispose of unused, unwanted, or expired Rx medication via secure, confidential disposal bins.

The DEA's Take Back Day provides an opportunity to prevent drug addiction and overdose deaths. It encourages people to dispose of prescription drugs while also educating the public about the potential for abuse of medications.

What You Can Do

- Commit to safely disposing of your prescription drugs
- Get the facts on Rx & OTC drug abuse
- Dispel the myth that Rx drugs are safe to abuse
- Know the signs and symptoms of drug use
- Monitor and secure all medications

Learn more:

Medication Disposal Drop-off Locations

www.venturacountyresponds.org/medication-safety

DEA Take Back Day

takebackday.dea.gov

Ventura County Responds

www.venturacountyresponds.org

Helpful Resources

Ventura County Limits

www.venturacountylimits.org

Ventura County Responds

venturacountyresponds.org

Opioid Data Dashboard, COAST Ventura County

www.coastventuracounty.org

Ventura County Behavioral Health

vcbh.org

Need Help?

If you or a family member are struggling with addiction, talk to your healthcare provider or call the confidential 24/7

Access Line: 1-844-385-9200.

> [Learn about Substance Use Treatment Services](#)

About Us

Supporting Health - Preventing Harm

Prevention Services works upstream to reduce alcohol and drug-related problems in our community. Initiatives are aimed at limiting harms related to impaired driving; underage and binge drinking; marijuana and vaping, especially as it relates to harms to youth; prescription drug abuse; and addressing health disparities among vulnerable populations.

A primary goal is to delay the onset of first use of alcohol and or other drugs by youth. We collaborate with schools, parent groups, government agencies, medical partners, law enforcement, community-based organizations and more.

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www.CoastVenturaCounty.org

www.VenturaCountyResponds.org

