

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

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National Prescription Drug Take Back Day Saturday, October 23, 2021 - 10AM to 2PM

Saving Lives

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. Over the last several years, this has expanded to other jurisdictions and retail pharmacies.

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](#)

[DEA Take Back Day](#)

takebackday.dea.gov

Spotlight: Interview with John Rivera, Clinic Administrator, DUI Program

Adapting to Change

In our newsletters we like to feature our Substance Use Services Division staff and contractors as well as community partners who are making a difference in their communities. This way you get to know us better and learn about the work that we do. Today we are talking with John Rivera, MBA, Clinic Administrator, Ventura and Fillmore DUI Programs.



How did you get interested in the field of substance use services?

John: I became interested when I was a student at California State Northridge University. I was doing my internship with the Clear Water Project that worked with inmates on early release from Lompoc Federal Prison. I received my bachelor's degree and MBA and completed a Certificate in Alcohol and Drug Studies from Oxnard College.

Tell us about your work in the DUI Program and your engagement with the community?

John: The goal for our DUI Program is for clients to successfully complete the program in a timely manner and learn from their past experience with a DUI. We want to educate people, make the process efficient, and ensure that we offer quality services that help to prevent people from returning to the program a second or third time.

In the DUI program, when we conduct face-to-face interviews, we offer community referrals based on the client's need. If someone needs something in addition to what we're providing we try to help streamline a community service by advocating for the client and giving them the resource. This may include referrals to

community and county agencies, including employment, financial, housing assistance, as well as to Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous support groups.

Our DUI Program is different because a person is referred by the court system or DMV. We are one of very few county run DUI Programs.

What do you hope to make changes in?

John: I believe in supporting our staff to receive the resources they need to be successful counselors. I want to offer quality services with a great customer service experience for our clients to help them complete the DUI Program and help get them get resources to lead successful and productive lives.

If you could give a closing remark or words of inspiration what would it be?

John: This past year has been extremely challenging for us all, and for me especially as a manager. Our clinics remained open during COVID-19 and we implemented changes within four weeks. It took tremendous team work from everyone. Many clients understood that we were providing services in new ways during changing times, especially using new telehealth services. It was a learning curve for both staff and clients to adapt to new technology and we figured out a way to provide services for a wide range of ages and education levels. It was an inspiration for our team to succeed in so many ways, to provide quality and consistent services, and to endure and grow successfully as a team. As with many community agencies adapting during this time, our team did a great job during this time!

Thank you John for sharing your experience with us!



In the News: Drug overdose deaths in 2020 were horrifying. Radical change is needed to address the drug crisis.

Rethinking How We Address Drug Use

August 31, 2021, By Dr. Nora Volkow

The provisional drug overdose death statistics for 2020 confirmed the addiction field's worst fears. More people died of overdoses in the United States last year than in any other one-year period in our history. The increase from the previous year was also more than we've ever seen—up 30 percent.

We must eliminate the attitudes and infrastructure barring treating people with substance use disorders. This means making it easier for clinicians to provide life-saving medications, expanding models of care like digital health technologies and mobile clinics that can reach people where they are, and ensuring that payers cover treatments that work.

Part of the failure of the current approach to the drug crisis arises from the unrealistic expectation that people should—and can—just stop using drugs. Little concern is shown for people with addiction unless and until they are drug-free, but the reality is that difficulties and resumed use typically mark the recovery journey. Compassion, care, and support need to extend to those still using drugs and those who return to drug use, not just to those who can satisfy the stringent standards of abstinence. Everyone with a substance use disorder, regardless of whether they are currently using drugs, needs good healthcare and may also need help with housing, employment, and childcare needs.

Radical change to save lives is long overdue. It is crucial that scientists help policymakers and other leaders rethink how we collectively address drugs and drug use, looking to the evidence base of what improves health and reduces harms across communities, and funding research to develop new prevention and treatment tools.

Learn more:

NIDA. 2021, August 31. [Drug overdose deaths in 2020 were horrifying. Radical change is needed to address the drug crisis.](#)

Ventura County Responds, Preventing Overdose

www.venturacountyresponds.org/preventing-overdose

Just for Fun

Delightful Recipes - From the Kitchens of Alma and Erika

By Erika Fernandez, Community Services Coordinator

If you are looking for the right time to start the conversation about drugs and alcohol with your kids, or if you are just looking for a fresh meal during hot weather, you might want to try this Shrimp Ceviche.



Ingredients

1 pound peeled and deveined raw medium shrimp

1/4 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice (from 2 lemons)
1/2 cup of clamato juice
2 medium tomatoes, seeded and chopped
1/2 small red onion, finely chopped
1 chili serrano, seeded and finely chopped
1/2 cup chopped fresh cilantro
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
1/8 teaspoon cumin
1 medium avocado
Tortilla chips or Tostadas, for serving

Instructions

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil over high heat. Turn off the heat, add the shrimp, and poach until the shrimp are opaque and just cooked through, 2 to 3 minutes. Drain the shrimp and set aside until cool enough to handle, about 10 minutes. Chop the shrimp into 1/2-inch pieces and place in a large bowl. Add the lemon juice, clamato juice, tomatoes, red onion, chili serrano, cilantro, salt, pepper and cumin, and toss to combine. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up to 4 hours.

Just before serving, dice the avocado, add to the ceviche, and gently toss to combine. Serve with tortilla chips or tostadas, if desired.

Remember: Doing fun things with your kids can be an opportunity to talk about drugs and alcohol and how to stay safe. For more resources check out [Tips for Talking With Your Kids](#) and [Wellness Every Day](#).

Featured Campaign: Tips for Talking with Your Kids

Back to School Conversations Made Easy



While at home together, take time to talk with your children about healthy choices. Now that children are back in school it is even more important to start the conversations. Here are some tips for talking with your kids about vaping, drugs and alcohol:


- Remember: Parents are the #1 reason that kids choose not to use drugs.
- Start young and make talking about it a regular habit.
- Find the right times for relaxed conversations that won't be interrupted. If sitting at the family dinner table feels too intense, try talking while driving, walking the dog or cooking together.
- Comment on media stories and popular culture news. Frame it as a health issue. Start the conversation in ways your child can relate to.
- Listen. Be patient.
- Be clear about your expectations for them to make healthy choices.
- Ask open ended questions, not intrusive or blaming. "What would you do if a friend offered you...?" Focus on 'what if' questions and what they could say or do. Be informed and answer questions.

Learn more:

[Tips for Talking With Your Kids](#)

Spotlight: Meth - Don't Buy the Lie Campaign

Providing the Truth About Meth



“He said it would
give me an
energy boost.”

Don't buy it. Meth might give you
a high. But the crash will leave
you hurting.

Learn more: www.TalkingAboutMeth.org

METH
Don't Buy
the Lie

The “Meth - Don't Buy the Lie” campaign is targeted to young adults who may be at risk for trying meth. The goal of the campaign is to provide the truth about meth without preaching or provoking an automatic rejection of a message which comes easily to people in this age range.

Did you Know?

Over time, meth blocks the ability to get happiness from anything else.

- A flood of dopamine pleasure is followed by a craving for more
- Money and scoring meth become more important than anything else
- People who develop addiction need greater amounts of meth in order to function and feel "normal"
- Despite physical problems and effects on relationships, the need for meth feels most important.
- Withdrawal is very hard, but recovery is possible.
- Meth is hard to quit, but help is available.

As part of this campaign, attention-catching geo-targeted messages were displayed at selected locations throughout the county. We will continue to share the campaign videos in upcoming editions of this newsletter as it is important to help increase awareness and educate the community about this problem.

Learn more:

Meth - Don't Buy the Lie

www.TalkingAboutMeth.org

HablandoDeMeth.org

In the News: Marijuana Use at Historic High Among College-aged Adults in 2020

Substance Use Trends Since COVID-19

September 8, 2021, 2020 Monitoring the Future (MTF) Survey

Annual NIH-supported study reports changing substance use trends among college students and college-aged adults.

Annual marijuana use has continued to increase over the past five years for college students, reaching the highest level in over three-and-a-half decades in 2020. In contrast, similar increases and record highs in marijuana use have not been observed among 12th graders in recent years.

“The COVID-19 pandemic dramatically changed the way that young people interact with one another and offers us an opportunity to examine whether drug taking behavior has shifted through these changes,” said NIDA Director Nora D. Volkow, M.D. “Moving forward, it will be critical to investigate how and when different substances are used among this young population, and the impact of these shifts over time.”

The survey recorded a halt in the dramatic increases in vaping marijuana and vaping nicotine among college-aged adults observed between 2017 and 2019. In 2020, these increases leveled off, with 12% of college students and 14% of noncollege respondents reporting vaping marijuana in the past 30 days.

“Historically, college students have reported the highest levels of binge drinking compared to same-aged youth who are not enrolled in college. This is the first year where binge drinking was similar between the two groups,” said John Schulenberg, Ph.D., professor of psychology at the University of Michigan and principal investigator of the Monitoring the Future panel study. “While binge drinking has been gradually declining among college students for the past few decades, this is a new historic low, which may reflect effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of reduced time with college friends.”

Learn more:

NIDA. 2021, September 8. [Marijuana use at historic high among college-aged adults in 2020.](#)

Vaping FactCheck Ventura County
www.vapingfactcheckvc.org

Community Outreach Happenings

Our Community Outreach team, Alma and Ignacio Ixta, attended the Oxnard High School Wellness Self-Care Health Fair on September 23, and the Vista Real Charter School Health Fair in Santa Paula on September 25. The Ventura County Health Care Agency provided vaccines for attendees. It was great to see everyone in the community again!





Upcoming Events

We will keep you posted on upcoming events in each newsletter.

Community Wellness Fair

10/9/21, 10:00 AM-2:30 PM

Constitution Park, 601 Carmen Drive, Camarillo



Health and Wellness Fair

10/16/21, 8:00 AM-2:00 PM

Ventura College (Outdoors Parking Lot)

4667 Telegraph Rd., Ventura

Attitudes and Stigma Around Addiction

10/27/21, 11:00 AM, PT

National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA)

[Register](#)

Helpful Resources

If you are looking for resources in the community, check out our websites. We continually add news, campaigns and more.

Ventura County Limits

This website is a portal to help learn about our efforts to address substance use challenges in our communities.

www.venturacountylimits.org

Ventura County Responds

This website tracks what is being done in Ventura County to address the opioid crisis and provides the latest information for prescribers and community members.

venturacountyresponds.org

Vaping FactCheck

Learn about the risks of vaping and the impact on teens. Keep informed about the latest research and news.

www.vapingfactcheckvc.org

Social Determinants of Health

The Social Determinants of Health website provides resources, news, and features community agencies or “Drivers of Change” who are working to building healthier communities through individual, organizational and community wide effort and engagement.

www.healthequityvc.org

Ventura County Behavioral Health

The Ventura County Behavioral Health Department (VCBH) provides mental health and substance use treatment services. Learn about our services and how to access help.

vcbh.org

Follow us on Social Media

www.facebook.com/VCBehavioralHealth

www.facebook.com/venturacountylimits

twitter.com/vclimits

Check out our Newsletters

www.venturacountylimits.org/community-connections

www.healthequityvc.org/newsletters

About Us

Supporting Health – Preventing Harm

Ventura County Behavioral Health, Substance Use Services - Prevention, 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 and community-based organizations.

And...in case you celebrate Halloween

For those that like to dress up our pets



Photo: Howloween Molly the Scottie Dog, Janet Kaplan

Contact Us

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*Photo: Alma Ixta and Erika Fernandez
pre-COVID-19; Pumpkin Patch, Janet Kaplan*



STAY CONNECTED

