



## The Coalition for Prevention, Addiction Education and Recovery (CPAR), a Program of Community Health Partnership

### Background:

Deaths from drug overdoses in Colorado are reaching a crisis level. Not only does the state's death rate from overdoses top the national average, but those numbers have increased across the state, according to the Colorado Health Institute (<http://coloradohealthinstitute.org/key-issues/detail/community-health/colorado-county-drug-overdose-death-rate>). Within El Paso County the cause of death due to opioid overdose has steadily increased from 2010-2015, with the largest increase seen between the 2010-2012 and 2013-2015 time period. This increase in opioid overdoses correlates to the increase in heroin-caused deaths from 2010-2015.

We now know that overdoses from prescription opioid pain relievers are a driving factor in the 15-year increase in national opioid overdose deaths. Since 1999, the amount of prescription opioids sold in the U.S. nearly quadrupled,<sup>1</sup> yet there has not been an overall change in the amount of pain that Americans report<sup>2</sup> & <sup>3</sup>. Deaths from prescription opioids—drugs like oxycodone, hydrocodone, and methadone—have also quadrupled since 1999.<sup>4</sup>

### Activities:

In response to the growing epidemic, Community Health Partnership (CHP) convened a newly formed coalition in March 2016 to address the prescription drug/opioid epidemic in El Paso County. The coalition is comprised of representatives from the following sectors in the community: elected officials, public health, emergency departments, hospitals, ambulatory care practices, UCCS Medical School, Peak Vista Community Health Centers' Nurse Practitioner Fellowship program, military, dentists, veterinarians, judicial court system, first responders, D-11 school district, law enforcement, treatment providers, social change advocates, recovery advocates, and harm reduction advocates.

One outcome from the initial community discussion in March 2016 was the development of four work groups to address key issues related to the opioid epidemic: Access to Treatment, Public Awareness, Provider Education and Public Safety. Over the course of six months, members of the workgroups met on a regular basis to identify gaps, assess community capacity

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<sup>1</sup> CDC. Wide-ranging online data for epidemiologic research (WONDER). Atlanta, GA: CDC, National Center for Health Statistics; 2016. Available at <http://wonder.cdc.gov>.

<sup>2</sup>Chang H, Daubresse M, Kruszewski S, et al. Prevalence and treatment of pain in emergency departments in the United States, 2000 – 2010. *Amer J of Emergency Med* 2014; 32(5): 421-31.

<sup>3</sup> Daubresse M, Chang H, Yu Y, Viswanathan S, et al. Ambulatory diagnosis and treatment of nonmalignant pain in the United States, 2000 – 2010. *Medical Care* 2013; 51(10): 870-878.

<sup>4</sup> CDC. Wide-ranging online data for epidemiologic research (WONDER). Atlanta, GA: CDC, National Center for Health Statistics; 2016. Available at <http://wonder.cdc.gov>



and prioritize recommendations to prevent and reduce overdoses from narcotic painkillers, such as morphine and oxycodone, as well as heroin.

On September 27, 2016, the Coalition hosted a community forum to report on recommendations from each of the workgroups to include in the development of a community-based response to the epidemic. Nearly sixty individuals were in attendance, including Mayor John Suthers, Jose Esquibel, Director of Office of Community Engagement, Colorado Department of Law, Office of the Attorney General, and Dr. Robert Valuck, Director of the Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention (Consortium).

### Successes:

- Convened representatives from key agencies in the community and securing support from the Consortium and the Omni Institute. Infrastructure of coalition has been formalized to include a Coordinating Council, Steering Committee, and Workgroups.
- Identified official name of coalition: Coalition for Prevention, Addiction Education and Recovery (CPAR)
- Developed vision and mission statements
  1. **Vision Statement:** We are a safe, informed, and thriving community of engaged individuals making healthy choices free of substance misuse.
  2. **Mission Statement:** To a sustainable community of partnerships committed to preventing and reducing substance misuse by promoting a culture of wellness through education, prevention, treatment and recovery support.
- Community Health Partnership received a grant from the Colorado Health Foundation to conduct a Community Readiness Assessment in our community. This will:
  1. help to identify our community's strengths and gaps in addressing the opioid epidemic, and the obstacles we are likely to meet as we move forward
  2. point to appropriate actions that match our community's readiness levels
- Community Health Partnership received a national grant from BUILD to fund Project Detour, a pilot program for women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, have alcohol or opioid use disorders and are involved with the criminal justice system
- Addition of the following workgroups:
  - 1) Family and Friends Workgroup to support those who have been impacted by addiction and/or the death of a loved one
  - 2) Data Workgroup to focus on issues relating to the identification, collection, and communication of data regarding prescription drug misuse and illegal drug use in El Paso County.



**Summary:**

Without efforts to prevent and control opioid abuse, it is highly likely that the crisis in El Paso County will continue to escalate. One needs to look only at how the epidemic has progressed in cities such as Huntington, West Virginia where there were 27 heroin overdoses within four hours, including one death on August 15, 2016. Another city that has been hit hard is Cleveland, Ohio where there were seven overdose deaths on September 24, 2016.

The proposed efforts include the development and implementation of a community-based plan to decrease the morbidity and mortality rates associated with the opioid epidemic, decrease utilization of emergency departments and first responders. Through Collective Impact strategies, the Coalition will focus on population accountability for the well-being of our community and performance accountability for programs, agencies, and service systems committed to implementing action steps to prevent and control opioid abuse.

(Updated 1/11/18 by Mary Steiner, CPAR Coordinator)