



ST. MARY'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT
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NEWS RELEASE *for Immediate Release*

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Drug Summit Planned for Parents in St. Mary's County

St. Mary's Opioid Overdose Response

Leonardtown, MD - As the sobering reality of pill addiction continues to increase locally, so too does heroin and the amount of heroin and pill related deaths. The reality of the situation is that these accidental and lethal overdoses don't discriminate – youth are not immune from the epidemic. In response to overdoses occurring in St. Mary's County, a Drug Summit for Parents is being planned for March, 7 2014.

After a statewide strategy was developed for reducing opioid overdose deaths, the St. Mary's County Department of Aging & Human Services established an Opioid Overdose Prevention Workgroup. The group was tasked with developing and implementing a local plan to reduce fatal and non-fatal opioid related overdoses. The workgroup is comprised of representatives from the St. Mary's County Department of Aging and Human Services; St. Mary's County Health Department; Medstar St. Mary's Hospital; Walden Sierra; St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office; St. Mary's County Detention Center and local pharmacies, including St. John's Pharmacy.

As part of their strategy these partners are working together to respond to the community by hosting a Drug Summit for Parents: An Open Discussion about Pills and Heroin in St. Mary's County—Parents—The Anti-Drug. The Drug Summit will be held Friday, March 7, 2014, at 6:30 p.m. at the Hollywood Volunteer Fire Hall. The Drug Summit is geared toward families with teens and young adults across Southern Maryland. Come learn about pathways to use, how the drugs are accessed, and take advantage of the opportunity to share youth and parent attitudes about the use of prescription drugs and heroin.

In developing the local Opioid Overdose Prevention Plan, the St. Mary's County Overdose Prevention Workgroup reviewed data on drug related deaths from the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner; admissions to treatment; drug related emergency petitions; and inmate population data. County level data from the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner indicated heroin overdose deaths in St. Mary's County increased from 2009 to 2010 (from 0 to 4) but remained the same from 2010 to 2011. This data also indicates total opioid deaths, after rising for three consecutive years (2008 to 2010), dropped by 40% from 2010 to 2011. However, the St. Mary's County Sheriff's office has reported an increase in the current 2013 calendar year with five heroin related deaths and two pill related deaths so far. Data on treatment admissions indicated a rise in

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admissions to detox levels of care involving Oxycodone from 2009 to 2012, surpassing heroin and other opiate related treatment admissions in 2011 and 2012. The Sheriff's office also reported that, "Pharmaceutical based opioids such as Percocet, oxycodone, OxyContin, Vicodin and hydrocodone are frequently diverted from their intended medical purposes while heroin, an illicit opiate, is imported from around the world and distributed through a more traditional illegal drug network."

Local strategies to reduce overdose deaths include outreach to identified high risk populations, education and awareness to the general public and clinical communities, as well as a local media campaign. SMART Medicine is a local media campaign, being designed through the workgroup, to generate awareness on the rising issue of opioid misuse, abuse, and overdose, as well as to provide information and resources on the safe management of prescription medications.

To review the Maryland Opioid Overdose Prevention Plan go to:

http://adaa.dhmh.maryland.gov/Documents/content_documents/OverdosePrevention/MarylandOpioidOverdosePreventionPlan2013.pdf

