



PRORITY: Stem the disease of opioid addiction, a crisis that threatens the health and safety of growing numbers of people in our community

BACKGROUND: The United States has 4.6% of the world's population, yet we use 80% of the world's opioids. In Buncombe County, there were over 17 million painkillers prescribed in 2016 – this equals almost 68 pills for every man, woman, and child in Buncombe County. From January to August 2017, there were 230 opioid overdose emergency department visits in Buncombe County. Today in North Carolina, you are more likely to die of an overdose than a car crash. Some opioids are prescription painkillers, such as oxycodone, codeine cough syrup, Percocet, or Vicodin. Some opioids, like heroin and fentanyl, are illegal drugs. Addiction to opioids is a public health crisis with costs to families, neighborhoods and the community.

GOALS:

- Increase public awareness about the disease of opioid addiction and ways that the community can be a part of the solution
- Equip professionals and the public with the information and tools for prevention and response, with a focus on youth prevention
- Limit the supply of prescription painkillers and illegal opioids in the community and hold the industry accountable that made the epidemic possible
- Increase access to mental health and substance abuse treatment services
- Respond and follow-up when overdoses occur to reduce harm and increase wellness

LEAD DEPARTMENTS: Community Engagement; Emergency Medical Services; Health and Human Services; Sheriff's Office; Strategic Partnerships

ACTIONS: The following is a summary of activities and investments by Buncombe County Government in support of the goals listed above.





| | <i>Completed/Ongoing</i> | <i>Proposed/Upcoming</i> |
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| <i>Public Awareness & Community Engagement</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Closer Than You Think,” a county wide plan to raise public awareness of the dangers of addiction and connect citizens to needed resources • Faith leaders opioid summit • Leadership of inter-agency Painkiller Task Force to explore and implement community based strategies on combating the disease of opioid addiction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opioid town hall conversations & community listening sessions in locations across the county • Prescription painkiller speaker’s bureau |
| <i>Prevention</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnering on training on safer prescribing practices for medical providers • Working with youth substance use prevention coalition to develop materials and training for youth in schools and provide resources to school administrators and parents regarding substance use | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering education and tools for school Health Nurses • Planning a youth led Opioid Summit focused on opioid education and awareness involving schools, students and parents |
| <i>Limit the Supply & Hold the Industry Accountable</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public nuisance lawsuit against the drug manufacturers and wholesale drug distributors that made the opioid epidemic possible • Drug take back events throughout the community • Increased law enforcement approaches focusing on illegal supply | |
| <i>Treatment & Wellness</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedding an opioid diversion peer support model in the Justice Resource Center • Partnering with medical leaders to provide supports to pregnant and new mothers with substance use disorder so that they can make a safety plan, understand how to care for themselves and their newborn safely, and access appropriate levels of treatment for substance misuse • Creation of a special unit of social workers and parent mentors that intervene quickly to get parents into treatment, provide peer support and actively partner with parents and children for better outcomes for the entire family unit | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnering for the creation of a transitional housing option for new mothers in recovery with peer support and safe housing along with their newborns |
| <i>Overdose Response</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the availability of Narcan overdose reversal medication in emergency response settings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issued a Request for Proposal to community partners for supportive follow up services for people impacted by opioid overdose |

