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NEARLY 224,000 COLORADANS
MISUSE PRESCRIPTION
PAIN RELIEVERS EACH YEAR



©2016 TakeMedicinesCarefully.org
This.org is the state's official online resource in addressing this public health crisis
education on the safe use, storage and disposal of prescription drugs.

Public Awareness



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Public awareness campaigns are a key part of the fight against prescription drug misuse and abuse.

Campaigns can inform the public about the risks of abuse and provide people with information about how to protect themselves and their families. Awareness campaigns in your community can help garner support for community action and lead to strategies and programs that address prescription drug misuse and abuse.

In this chapter, you will find information about statewide public awareness campaigns that focus on prescription drug misuse or that have developed resources related to the subject. These campaigns have developed everything from social media posts and graphics to infographics, posters, brochures, radio PSAs, and handouts for senior citizens, such as medication lists and suggestions for questions to ask your prescribing physician. Links to those resources are within this text. Use this chapter if you are:

- Interested in communicating a message to the general public or a targeted group;
- Promoting existing and tested media campaigns;
- Hosting or attending public awareness events, like a health fair; and/or
- Wanting to create messages for your coalition.

Some of the material below was developed to reach the general public. Other material is targeted to specific audiences, such as teenagers. Your community should use the material best suited to your objectives in the manner you see fit. Your community can also adapt many of the assets to add your logo and contact information. Before you spend a significant amount of time and money creating a new campaign, see what is already available for use. This is a good way to use materials that have been developed and tested by a reputable organization and reinforce, not compete with, existing messaging.

At the end of this chapter you will find information about the Consortium's Public Awareness Work Group, which helps plan and execute campaigns and can collaborate with your organization.

Glossary

Earned Media

Publicity gained through promotional efforts and placed as a news story, rather than as paid advertising.

Evidence-Based Message

A message that cites statistics from credible sources to establish its own credibility.

Resources

Take Meds Seriously Campaign



You're the Solution Campaign



The Take Meds Seriously campaign is a comprehensive statewide campaign focused on building awareness of what Coloradans can do to prevent prescription drug misuse and abuse. It emphasizes the importance of safe use, safe storage, and safe disposal of prescription drugs. The Take Meds Seriously campaign was created by the Consortium's Public Awareness Work Group with funding from the Attorney General's office and administered through the Governor's office.

The campaign developed many resources that can be used by communities that wish to address the opioid crisis. The assets include brochures, wallet cards, PSA videos, and social media materials. Examples are included in this document. They can be found in the resources section of the campaign website, www.takemedsseriously.org. The site is updated by Consortium staff, and if you cannot download and use these files, please contact info@corxconsortium.org for assistance.

Three smaller, targeted campaigns have been developed under the Take Meds Seriously brand.

This campaign was created to inform older adults about the special risks opioids pose, especially for people who take multiple medications. The campaign encourages seniors to talk to their doctors about how to safely use opioids and to double check potentially harmful interactions with other medications and alcohol.

The campaign launched in 2018 in pilot locations in Pueblo, the San Luis Valley, and Montrose and Delta counties. The campaign's strategy is to work with local agencies and grassroots organizations who could distribute material through locations such as senior centers.

The campaign's website is takemedsseriously.org/opioid-education/youre-the-solution. Special material was developed for the campaign, such as easy-to-read rack cards and posters and tray liners for senior centers. That material can be ordered through the catalogue posted online at takemedsseriously.org/wp-content/uploads/RX-65-Catalog.pdf.

Get Serious, They're Opioids Campaign

GET SERIOUS. THEY'RE OPIOIDS.

WHAT TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR, DENTIST OR PHARMACIST

A recent survey of Coloradans found roughly 80% of those surveyed were prescribed an opioid at some point in their lives. Opioids are prescription pain relievers such as Percocet, Vicodin, and Oxycontin. While opioids can be effective for pain relief when used appropriately, they come with risks including serious interactions with other medication and addiction. Your doctor, dentist and pharmacist can help minimize these risks. It starts with a conversation.

Before you start taking a prescription pain medication ask:

- Is this an opioid?
- Am I at risk for addiction?
- How will this help restore function?
- Are there alternatives that could provide similar relief (such as over-the-counter pain relievers)?
- How often should I take this medicine, and how much should I take?
- After how many days can I consider stopping this medication?
- Where should I store this medication? (Let your doctor know if you have children in your home, or other individuals that may be at risk of accidental or intentional misuse.)
- How can I safely get rid of any leftover medication? (Note: Your pharmacist can also provide helpful information, and you can also find safe medication disposal sites in Colorado at www.takemededback.org.)

What to share with your doctor:

- ALL other medications and supplements you're currently taking.** Taking certain medications while taking pain medication can cause serious, potentially deadly interactions. Especially in an emergency, having a list of all medications and supplements you're currently taking is extremely important. You can print a My Medications List at TakeMedsSeriously.org/Resource.
- ANY struggles you've had with alcohol or other drugs and any history of addiction in your family.** Your wellbeing is the priority. There is a risk of addiction with opioids.

TakeMedsSeriously.org

This digital campaign uses targeted online advertising to let patients know the questions they should ask their doctors about opioids. The campaign featured digital ads in the Greeley and Fort Collins area. Its website is stakemedsseriously.org/opioid-education/get-serious-theyre-opioids.

Take Meds Back Safe Disposal Awareness Campaign

Safe disposal of medication is vital to reduce the availability of prescription drugs that could be misused. The Take Meds Back campaign works to inform the public about how and where to safely dispose unused medication. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment collaborated with the Public Awareness and Safe Disposal work groups to produce the campaign. Links to guides, videos, a map of locations of disposal sites, and more can be found in the Safe Disposal chapter of the *Community Reference*. This material also can be found on the Take Meds Back website, www.takemededback.org.

Lift the Label Stigma-Reduction Campaign



Lift the Label is a public awareness campaign that strives to remove damaging labels and stigmas that prevent those with opioid addiction from seeking effective treatment. The campaign was developed by the Colorado Department of Human Services, Office of Behavioral Health and is funded through the State Targeted Response to the Opioid Crisis Grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), an agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation.

The campaign features a website, print resources, videos of people describing how they overcame opioid use disorder, and more. One item of note is the opioid memorial wall, which appears at public events around the state. For more information, visit the website: liftthelabel.org.

Speak Now Colorado Campaign

The Speak Now Colorado campaign is an educational resource for parents and caregivers on how to start conversations and keep them going about the risks of alcohol, marijuana, prescription drugs, and other drugs among youth. It is managed by the Colorado Department of Human Services, Office of Behavioral Health and focuses on providing evidence-based information and resources to parents and caregivers regarding youth substance abuse prevention in Colorado. You can find the campaign's community partner toolkit and promotional materials online at www.speaknowcolorado.org/toolkits.

Rise Above Colorado

Rise Above Colorado is a drug abuse prevention organization focused on measurably impacting teen perceptions and attitudes about the risks of substance abuse. Its mission is to help youth make empowered, healthy choices.

The organization has developed a classroom-based lesson called “Not Prescribed,” which provides middle and high school students with the science and the stories to understand the risks of misusing prescription drugs. This 45-minute standards-based lesson leverages personal testimony from teens and their families through a compelling video and provides educators with a science-based interactive presentation to facilitate conversation and learning. Access this resource by visiting www.notprescribed.org.

I Rise Above is a Rise Above Colorado campaign that encourages teens to make healthy choices. The campaign features social norming messages that use statewide data to demonstrate that most youth are not misusing substances, including specific messages about prescription drugs. Complementing this messaging is the iriseaboveco.org website, which was written by teens for teens. The site has information about commonly misused drugs, including prescription opioids, stimulants, and sedatives.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Rx Awareness Campaign



The CDC has developed resources you can use as part of its RX Awareness campaign about prescription opioid misuse. Learn more at www.cdc.gov/rxawareness.

The CDC’s Rx Awareness campaign tells the real stories of people whose lives were affected by prescription opioids. State and local health departments and community organizations can take part in the Rx Awareness campaign and use the tested campaign materials and resources to launch campaigns, support local prevention activities, and raise awareness about the risks of prescription opioids.

Materials include digital assets, billboard ads, videos, and radio spots. Its website is www.cdc.gov/rxawareness. Information about how to launch the campaign in your community is at www.cdc.gov/rxawareness/resources.

GenerationRx

The Ohio State University College of Pharmacy and the Cardinal Health Foundation partnered to create GenerationRx, a resource to teach people of all ages about the potential dangers of misusing prescription medications. Coalitions can use GenerationRX’s ready-to-use educational materials, which are designed to provide everything you need to make a presentation or offer a program in your community, school, or college. Access this resource at www.generationrx.org.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)

The CDC, SAMHSA, and NIDA are federal agencies that have created websites that contain information about prescription drug and opioid misuse and links to resources you might find valuable.

The CDC website about opioid abuse can be accessed at www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/index.html.

The SAMHSA website about prescription drug misuse can be accessed at www.samhsa.gov/topics/prescription-drug-misuse-abuse. Its page about opioids is www.samhsa.gov/atod/opioids.

The NIDA website about opioids is online at www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/opioids.

Other Resources

Media Guidebook for Community Awareness

This reference guide, produced by the Office of Behavioral Health, provides community groups and organizations with an introduction to planning, using, and measuring strategic communications. It contains worksheets that help organizations identify audiences, plan tactics, and evaluate success. The guidebook also has a valuable glossary. It can be downloaded at www.corxconsortium.org/wp-content/uploads/OBH-Media-Guidebook.pdf.

2018 public awareness survey

The Consortium commissioned a statewide survey in 2018 to measure public attitudes around issues related to the opioid crisis. The report on survey results is online at www.corxconsortium.org/opioid-awareness-survey-2018/.

Data-driven messages

Coalitions interested in finding statistics to incorporate into their own evidence-based messages should refer to the Data chapter. Links to county-level data are available there.

Public awareness events

Events such as public forums and open houses can help build awareness and community engagement and support. The Consortium's Affected Families and Friends Work Group has created some events that might be appropriate for your organization. Please see that chapter for more information. Members and staff of the Consortium can support you by sending speakers to your event. If you would like to discuss us joining you, please email pm@corxconsortium.org.

The Consortium's Public Awareness Work Group

The Public Awareness Work Group focuses on impacting public consciousness and attitudes among Colorado citizens regarding the problem of prescription drug misuse and abuse, and promoting the safe use, storage, and disposal of prescription medications. The goals of the Public Awareness Work Group are to develop and extend the reach of existing campaigns that target the general public as well as specific populations such as young adults and seniors. These campaigns can help overcome existing obstacles and misperceptions about use, storage, and disposal of prescription medications and raise awareness of the dangers of overdose and addiction.

If you have an interest in this area or have questions about this topic, reach out to the Consortium program manager at pm@corxconsortium.org. If you would like to join or get more information about the work group, please visit www.corxconsortium.org/public-awareness-work-group. You can also join by emailing info@corxconsortium.org.

Public Awareness Work Group Co-Chairs

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