



WHITTIER STREET HEALTH CENTER

Comprehensive. Compassionate. Community.

It Takes a Village

*A Whittier Street Health Center
Campaign to Stop the Opioid
Epidemic*

The mission of Whittier Street Health Center is to provide high quality, reliable and accessible primary health care and support services for diverse populations to promote wellness and eliminate health and social disparities.

What are opioids?

- Opioids are a class of drugs that include pain relievers available legally by prescription, such as oxycodone (OxyContin®), hydrocodone (Vicodin®), codeine, morphine, and many others.
- Opioids also refer to the illegal drug heroin, synthetic opioids such as fentanyl.
- Opioid pain relievers are generally safe when taken for a short time and as prescribed by a doctor, but because they produce euphoria in addition to pain relief, they can be misused (taken in a different way or in a larger quantity than prescribed, or taken without a doctor's prescription).
- Regular use—even as prescribed by a doctor—can lead to dependence and, when misused, opioid pain relievers can lead to overdose incidents and deaths.

Current Opioid- Related Overdose Data for Massachusetts

- 2,107 opioid-related deaths in 2016, the highest ever and **triple** the number in 2013.
- 978 deaths attributed to opioids occurred in the first six months of 2017, down from 1,031 in the January-to-June period in 2016.

But even as fewer people die, it is not clear whether fewer are overdosing. It's also not guaranteed that the death rate will continue to decline.



Trends in Massachusetts

- Fentanyl, in particular, is linked to the crisis in Massachusetts. In the first quarter of 2017, the powerful synthetic opioid was present in 81 percent of the toxicology screenings for overdose deaths. Meanwhile, heroin has declined to be present in about 39 percent of the overdose deaths.
- During the first quarter of 2017, DPH data indicates that emergency medical services teams administered the overdose-reversal drug naloxone on average 1.4 times per incident. Nearly one-third of opioid-related overdoses required more than one dose of the drug.
- Massachusetts had the highest rate of opioid-related emergency room visits out of 30 states where data was surveyed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.



Boston's Response to the Epidemic

- Addressing the epidemic of addiction has been one of Mayor Walsh's top priorities, which led him to create the first-ever municipal-based Mayor's Office of Recovery Services in 2015.
- Boston has more than doubled staff at the City's access to care program, created the City's first 24/7 recovery support hotline through 311, and added a street outreach team in heavily impacted areas.
- The City has long been a leader in Narcan[®] use and overdose prevention. In 2014, Mayor Walsh announced that all first responders in the City of Boston would be trained to administer and carry Narcan[®]. Boston Public Health Commission staff trained more than 10,000 people on how to spot an overdose and administer Narcan[®] in 2016 alone.



Boston's Response- continued

- Through collaboration with EMS, BPD, BFD, BPHC, Boston 311, and other municipal departments, the City of Boston offers a comprehensive set of innovative approaches to treating substance use disorders and combating the national opioid epidemic.



Whittier's Response to the Epidemic

Revision of Opioid Prescribing Policies:

- CDC guidelines for safer chronic opioid prescribing have been used to revise Whittier's Long Term Opioid Prescription policy. The policy has been implemented across all of our primary care departments with the goal of developing a standardized, clinic-wide policy.
- All Behavioral Health clinicians, front desk staff and members of security were trained to administer Narcan in June, 2016.
- A Grand Rounds Narcan training was conducted on April 27, 2017. Both trainings covered: how to recognize signs and symptoms of an overdose; what to do during an overdose; and how to administer Narcan.

Whittier's Response to the Epidemic-continued

- Since 2013, Whittier's Narcotics Committee has promoted safe and effective prescribing practices of controlled substances for patients who suffer from chronic pain and psychiatric disorders. This unique collaboration between the Adult and Family Medicine and Behavioral Health providers, joined by the Clinical Pharmacist, High Risk Nurses and the Director of Nursing is aimed at combating the misuse of prescription narcotics while effectively treating pain. The committee provides consultation for patient medication selection and dosing, monitoring and proper termination of controlled substances.
- Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT): Medication-assisted treatment combines the use of medications and behavioral therapy to treat people who have substance abuse disorders. The use of certain types of medications has become a central part of the treatment of opioid use disorders.



Whittier's Response to the Epidemic- continued

Whittier's It Takes A Village Campaign is:

- An effort to prevent and reduce the risk of opioid use disorder through education, prevention, policy change and intervention strategies.
- A comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach to the management of chronic pain.



It Takes A Village

*A cultural transformation is needed to better prevent, assess, treat and understand pain. **Treatment of pain does not always equal prescription for opioids.** We want to support you in finding treatment options that will effectively and safely help you manage your pain.*

