

The United States is in the midst of an opioid overdose epidemic.

During National Public Health Week, the Sudbury Board of Health would like to raise awareness for this rapidly growing problem in our communities.

Opioids, including prescription opioid pain relievers, and heroin killed more than 28,000 people in 2014, more than any year on record. At least half of all opioid overdose deaths involve prescription opioids (CDC statistic).

This Year Governor Charlie Baker signed into law a measure that places tighter state control on opioids, in an effort to stanch the supply of the addictive drugs. Baker trumpeted the bipartisan legislation as “the most comprehensive measure in the country to combat opioid addiction.”

For youth, opioid addiction may start when prescribed a pain killer following an injury or surgery. Talk with your teens now and warn them about potential dangers of taking prescription pain killers and the addiction they cause.

Know the signs of addiction:

- Pills or medicine bottles are missing from your home
- Abrupt changes in finances
- Dramatic mood changes
- Lower grades, changes in friends, or changes in sleep or appetite
- Loss of concern about appearance
- Physical signs of fatigue, weight loss, slurred speech, and dizziness

Prevent opioid prescription abuse:

- Dispose of any unused medications at home
- Be clear with your expectations on drug and alcohol use
- Talk with your doctor about medications prescribed for your family
- Take an inventory of any medications at home that may lead to abuse
- Keep medication in a secure area away from your children

If you suspect that a family member is having a problem with prescription opioids or heroin call the MA Substance Abuse Helpline for free confidential information about substance abuse and counseling resources. Stop Addition in its Tracks 1-800-327-5050 or www.helpline-online.com.

Please visit www.mass.gov/stopaddiction and <http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/index.html> for more information. An upcoming Community Forum at Concord Carlisle High School on the Rising OPIOID Sponsored by Emerson Hospital is being held on Monday May 16, 2016 from 6:00-9:00pm (No Reservations Required). For information or questions please email: OpioidForum@emersonhosp.org or go to <http://cranehelp.org/event/community-forum-rising-opioid-epidemic-community/>.

