

# #CHANGETHEENDING - A PUBLIC HEALTH CAMPAIGN PROMOTING FENTANYL OVERDOSE PREVENTION

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## Synthetic Opioid Deaths Rise More Than 1,000% in Six Years

From 2013 to 2019, the synthetic opioid-involved death rate increased 1,040%, from 1.0 to 11.4 per 100,000 people, adjusted for age.



## BACKGROUND

FENTANYL WORKS BY BINDING TO THE BODY'S OPIOID RECEPTORS, WHICH ARE FOUND IN AREAS OF THE BRAIN THAT CONTROL PAIN AND EMOTIONS. ITS EFFECTS INCLUDE EXTREME HAPPINESS, DROWSINESS, NAUSEA, CONFUSION, CONSTIPATION, SEDATION, TOLERANCE, ADDICTION, RESPIRATORY DEPRESSION AND ARREST, UNCONSCIOUSNESS, COMA, AND DEATH. FENTANYL IS OFTEN ADDED TO HEROIN AND/OR COCAINE AS A COMBINATION PRODUCT BY DRUG DEALERS AS A CHEAP ALTERNATIVE WITH OR WITHOUT THE USER'S KNOWLEDGE. FENTANYL HAS BEEN FOUND IN COCAINE, METHAMPHETAMINE, MOLLY/MDMA, COUNTERFEIT PRESCRIPTION PILLS, AND POWDER SOLD AS HEROIN. EXPERTS CONSIDER 2 MG OF FENTANYL TO BE LETHAL, BUT MANY COUNTERFEIT PILLS CONTAIN UP TO 5 MG (MORE THAN TWICE THE LETHAL DOSE). THIS AMOUNT IS INCREDIBLY SMALL. ANY PILL OR DRUG NOT PURCHASED DIRECTLY FROM A PHARMACY COULD CONTAIN FENTANYL. THIS INCLUDES ILLICIT DRUGS (COCAINE, HEROIN, METH, ETC.) AS WELL AS COUNTERFEIT PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS (XANAX, ADDERALL, ETC.)

## OBJECTIVE

TO DESIGN A MULTIFACETED PUBLIC HEALTH CAMPAIGN TARGETING KING COUNTY RESIDENTS AGED 16-30 USING SOCIAL MEDIA, PODCAST ADVERTISING, TWITTER HASHTAGS AND SPONSORING A SUMMER CONCERT SERIES FEATURING A VARIETY OF ARTISTS AND MUSIC STYLES WHERE NARCAN (A LIFESAVING OPIATE REVERSAL DRUG) AND FENTANYL TEST STRIPS WILL BE PROVIDED AT NO COST, AND ATTENDEES CAN SHARE STORIES OF SURVIVAL AND LOSS TO RAISE OVERDOSE PREVENTION STRATEGY AWARENESS.

## METHODS

I RESEARCHED THE AGE GROUP WHO ARE PRIMARILY AFFECTED BY FENTANYL OVERDOSE, AND CONDUCTED INTERVIEWS AMONG THAT POPULATION. I FOUND THAT THEY HAD VERY STRONG VALUES ASSOCIATED TO THEIR FRIEND GROUPS, AND THAT MANY OF THEM HAD PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WITH OPIATE OVERDOSE OR KNEW SOMEONE WHO HAD BEEN IMPACTED. I DECIDED THAT A HASHTAG #CHANGETHEENDING WOULD BE AN EFFECTIVE WAY TO SHARE THE CAMPAIGN. SHARING STORIES OF THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN SAVED BY NARCAN AND GOT SOBER, THOSE WHO "CHANGED THE ENDING" WOULD BE POSITIVE MESSAGING AND DEMONSTRATE NARCANS EFFICACY. THE HASHTAG CAN BE USED AS A MEMORIAL TO THOSE WHO WERE UNABLE TO "CHANGE THE ENDING" PROVIDING A FACE TO THE FENTANYL EPIDEMIC. ADVERTISING FOR THE CAMPAIGN AND CONCERT SERIES WOULD CONSIST OF FLYERS AT HIGH SCHOOLS, COLLEGES, AND MUSIC VENUES AND PAID ADVERTISING ON TIK TOK, SNAPCHAT, INSTAGRAM AND ON POPULAR PODCASTS. MANY OF THE TARGET AUDIENCE EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN MUSIC AND THE ARTS, A SUMMER CONCERT SERIES SEEMED APPROPRIATE, A VARIETY OF ARTISTS OF ALL STYLES WOULD PERFORM AND SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKERS WOULD SPEAK OUT BRIEFLY ON FENTANYL AWARENESS. NARCAN AND FENTANYL TEST STRIPS WOULD BE AVAILABLE AT NO COST TO ATTENDEES.

## CONCLUSION

FENTANYL OVERDOSE IS THE LEADING CAUSE OF ACCIDENTAL DEATH AMONG RESIDENTS OF KING COUNTY (KING CO, 2022) ANY AND ALL EFFORTS MUST BE MADE TO MAKE FENTANYL TESTING STRIPS AND NARCAN AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC. EDUCATION IS NEEDED REGARDING THE CONTAMINATION OF COUNTERFEIT PILLS. TOGETHER, WE CAN #CHANGETHEENDING.

## REFERENCES

- CDC. (2022, MAY 11). *U.S. OVERDOSE DEATHS IN 2021 INCREASED HALF AS MUCH AS IN 2020 - BUT ARE STILL UP 15%.* CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION.
- KING COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH. (2023, APRIL 5). *OVERDOSE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE.* KING COUNTY.

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Illustration of a blue electric guitar and silhouettes of people dancing.