PUBLIC HEALTH WORKS | Preventing and Mitigating Substance Use Disorder

PUBLIC HEALTH BRINGS EXPERTISE AND SOLUTIONS

Big city health departments not only prevent, and reduce harm from, overdoses, but also improve outcomes for people who use drugs.

They are among the first to detect trends in emerging drugs, identify inequities in fatal and non-fatal overdoses, recognize hot spots, fund and provide supportive services rooted in reducing harm to individuals using, hold systemwide convenings, and implement quality improvement initiatives.

Big city health departments are also the first to identify and respond to local impacts, working to mitigate the effect of overdose and other harmful effects of substance use, including disease transmission.

They pilot, implement, and test innovative strategies that are often expanded in communities across their respective states and the country.

In 2021, BCHC member Southern Nevada Health District (which serves Las Vegas) launched its CDC-funded Linkage to Action (L2A) mobile outreach unit to prevent drug overdoses through education, surveillance, and assistance with accessing services.

How Big City Health Departments Prevent and Reduce Harm from Substance Use Disorder

**PREVENTION**

- Invest in policy and programs that prevent substance use and substance use disorders (SUDs) and their co-occurrence with other behavioral health and infectious disease conditions.
- Distribute naloxone and fentanyl test strips; offer drug checking services, and other harm reduction activities.
- Follow up with non-fatal overdose survivors.

**DATA**

- Collect and disseminate mortality/morbidity and surveillance data, evaluations, local assessment and Overdose Fatality Reviews, and whenever possible, nonfatal overdose surveillance.
The Big Cities Health Coalition (BCHC) is a forum for the leaders of America’s largest metropolitan health departments to exchange strategies and jointly address issues to promote and protect the health and safety of their residents. Collectively, BCHC’s 35 member jurisdictions directly impact more than 61 million people, or one in five Americans.

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