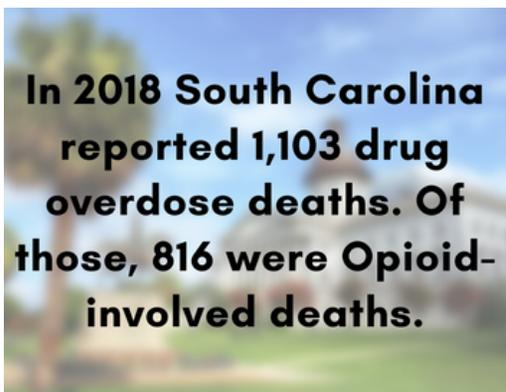




The Opioid Epidemic

AND MENTAL HEALTH

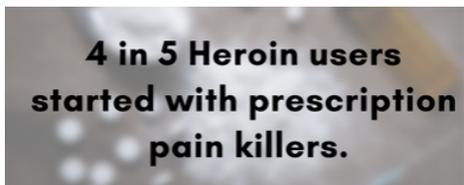
The opioid epidemic continues to pose a serious threat and is the leading cause of overdose death in the United States. Over 70,000 Americans die annually from drug overdoses, of which over two-thirds (67.8%) are caused by opioids. Many Americans who become addicted to opioids do so after initially receiving a prescription for pain following surgery as a treatment regimen. In addition, persons who have been diagnosed with mental problems, such as anxiety and depression, also become addicted to drugs. These people take drugs in an attempt to control and/or ease their symptoms due to their mental health problems, while others develop mental health problems related to their compulsive drug use. In either case, people suffering from mental health conditions are more likely to get opioid prescriptions and are also more likely to develop a dependence on them.



In 2018 South Carolina reported 1,103 drug overdose deaths. Of those, 816 were Opioid-involved deaths.



5 million prescriptions are filled every year in South Carolina.



4 in 5 Heroin users started with prescription pain killers.

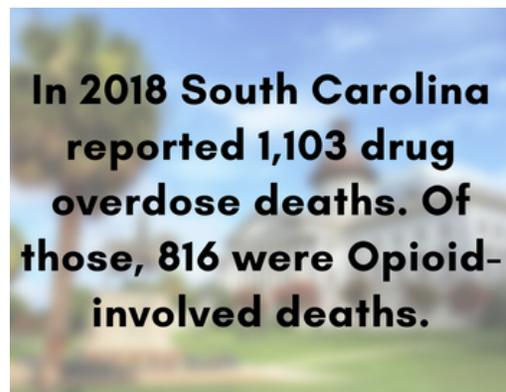
Having a mental health disorder increases the chances of staying on opioids long term. Adults with mood disorders are twice as likely to take prescription opioids for long periods as those with no mental health issues. Mental health is at the core of what is happening in our society. Suicide is increasing. Opioid-related deaths are increasing. It is important for not only mental health professionals to increase their understanding of the opioid crisis, but all Americans. One way for all Americans to learn more about the opioid epidemic and mental health, and how to effectively support someone experiencing a mental illness or experiencing an emotional crisis is to become a Mental Health First Aider.



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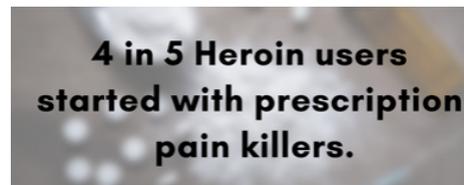
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Mothers Eliminating Secondhand Smoke (M.E.S.S.)

Since 1964, approximately 2,500,000 nonsmokers have died from health problems caused by exposure to secondhand smoke. During 2011-2012, 2 out of every 5 children ages 3 to 11, including 7 out of every 10 Black children, in the US were regularly exposed to secondhand smoke. M.E.S.S. is a program that encourages faith-based organizations to accept the challenge to address secondhand smoke by establishing maternal support groups, hosting educational sessions and initiating other appropriate activities to reduce tobacco use and secondhand smoke exposure.



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Mental Health First Aid

Just as CPR helps an individual having a heart attack, Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) assists someone experiencing a mental health or substance use-related crisis and connect the person with help. A public education program, the Mental Health First Aid course, introduces participants to risk factors and warning signs of mental health problems, builds understanding of their impact and overviews appropriate supports. Becoming a First Aider does not prepare one to diagnose or provide any counseling or therapy. Instead, the program offers concrete tools

and answer key questions like, "What do I do?" and, "Where can someone find help?" The program also teaches common risk factors and warning signs of specific illnesses like anxiety, depression, substance use, bipolar disorder, eating disorders and schizophrenia.

For those desiring to be trained, please contact our office to learn more as we offer training to faith-based organizations with 15 or more participants.

Kinship Care Day

Celebrate Kinship Care Day on March 26, 2020, from 11 am until 1 pm, on the North Grounds Steps of the State House. Kinship Care is when a child is being raised by grandparents, another relative or family friend. Learn more about Kinship Care Day by visiting www.facebook.com/events/2451566601825815.

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