**Background**

**United States:** Fatal and nonfatal opioid overdose rates in the United States continue to rise. Opioid overdose deaths in the United States were six times higher in 2017 compared to 1999.

**Maryland:** Maryland (MD) reported a 66% increase in drug-related deaths over a 2-year period, 89% of the increase attributed to opioids.

**Harford County:** Despite efforts to fight the opioid epidemic in Harford County, data from 2018 suggests the number of fatal opioid overdoses has not decreased. Adolescents are not excluded. Between 2013 and 2015, the number of Harford County high school students reporting prescription pain drug use increased for all grade levels. Data also suggests an increase in heroin use for 12th grade students since 2013. These findings suggest prevention measures among youth may be important in decreasing opioid-related deaths in Harford County Maryland.

**Purpose**

The purpose of the project is to decrease opioid use among youth in Harford County using the Communities that Care (CTC) prevention process.

**Methodology**

**Design:** Secondary Data Analysis

**Setting:** Aberdeen City Schools, Harford County

**Sample:** 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grade students

**Instrument:** Youth Risk Behavior Survey – 120-item survey

**Five Phase Prevention Process**

Community that Cares (CTC) is an evidence-based operating system implemented in five phases. The program promotes healthy youth development and decreases youth problem behavior.

**Phase 1: Get Started**
- Formed Community Advisory Board
- Assessed community readiness
- Identified key leaders
- Invited stakeholders to get involved

**Phase 2: Get Organized**
- Attended CTC training August 2018
- Wrote a vision statement
- Organized workgroups
- Developed a timeline for installing CTC

**Phase 3: Develop a Community Profile**
- Review youth survey data
- Identify risk/protective factors
- Assess community resources
- Identify gaps in existing resources

**Phase 4: Create a Plan**
- Key Leader Orientation to be held in 2019
- Define clear, measurable outcomes using data
- Select tested and effective policies and programs

**Phase 5: Implement and Evaluate**
- Implement selected programs
- Monitor and evaluate programs
- Track progress to ensure improvements are achieved

**Data Analysis:** Frequencies and Percentages are reported

**Structure of CTC in Aberdeen City**

- **Key Leaders**
- **Community Board**
- **Facilitator**
- **Executive Committee**
- **Six Workgroups**
  1. Risk & Protective Factor Assessment
  2. Community Outreach & Public Relations
  3. Youth Involvement
  4. Resource Assessment & Evaluation
  5. Funding
  6. Community Board Maintenance

**Discussion**

**Heroin**

- Overall, 4.3% of students said they had used heroin one or more times.
- Reported heroin use increased by grade and peaked in 12th grade at 5.4% compared to 2.3% in 9th grade.
- Males were more likely than females to report heroin use, at 11.8% and 3.2% respectively.
- Hispanic/Latino students were more likely to have used heroin than all other racial/ethnic groups.

**Prescription Opioids**

- Overall, 13.8% of students said they had misused prescription pain medicine.
- The likelihood of prescription pain medicine misuse increased between 9th and 11th grade with a small decrease in 12th grade.
- Males were less likely than females to have misused prescription pain medicine at 4.7% and 14.9% respectively.
- Hispanic/Latino students were more likely to have misused prescription pain medication than all other racial/ethnic groups.

**Conclusions**

- Hispanic/Latino students have the highest use rates compared to other students.
- Opioid use rates also increased by grade.
- Males were more likely to use heroin, while females were more likely to use prescription pain medicine which suggests the class of opioid used varies by gender.
- If CTC Harford County selects programs that address disparities in opioid use by race, age, and gender, opioid use among youth may decrease over time.

**References**


