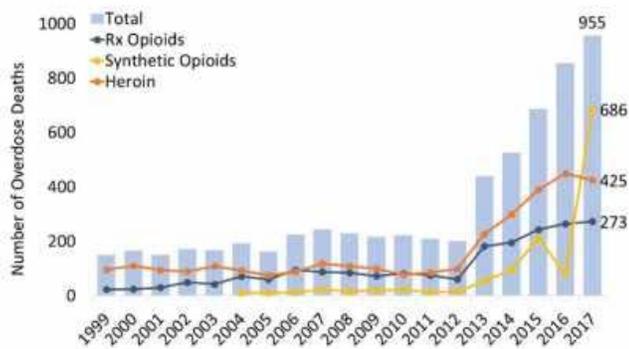


OPIOID HARM REDUCTION AND EDUCATION INITIATIVE

Providing resources and education to combat opioid overdose in high-risk communities across Connecticut

The Problem

An opioid epidemic has spread through the US in recent years, hitting Connecticut especially hard. Death by overdose has increased by 72% between 2014 and 2018, and CT currently has an overdose death rate two times higher than the national average.^{1,2} Although CT has seen success in training first responders to use naloxone, a medication which can safely temporarily reverse an overdose, there is still immense harm reduction potential in training everyday citizens to use naloxone and respond properly to an overdose.



Our Solution

After countless discussions with local health providers, community leaders, libraries, and those struggling with addiction themselves, we've gleaned insight into the depth and complexity of the opioid epidemic in Connecticut. Education is at the heart of our solution. Medical education is the most ethical and sustainable approach to achieving community health and wellness. Through grassroots collaborations that involve community-tailored and culturally cognizant training sessions and subsequent naloxone dissemination, we hope to empower communities to collectively take their medical trajectories into their own hands. We will partner with local recovery homes, libraries, soup kitchens and health facilities to provide comprehensive training sessions. We understand that substance use and abuse are the result of a greater epidemic of pain and suffering, and for many, opioids are seen as a solution not a problem. Harm reduction education stands paramount in ending death by overdose and promoting subsequent rehabilitation. Naloxone efficacy in 'take-home' programs has been adequately studied, finding that naloxone administered by non-trained professionals prevents overdose in 75-100% of cases³.

The Market/Landscape/Ecosystem

Currently, government-run initiatives such as the CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction make up the majority of the overdose harm reduction effort in CT. However, these initiatives focus on improving public services and equipping first responders to deal with overdose. Some NGOs like the CT Opioid Response Initiative have started to focus on naloxone access and overdose education, but access to resources and training is still insufficient in many communities; Those who need access to resources the most are still unable to get it. We plan to focus our efforts on spaces where we can reach high-risk audiences - those most likely to encounter overdose in their daily lives - such as public libraries, community health centers, soup kitchens, homelessness centers, and veteran associations.

Metrics

Our goal is to improve overdose readiness in Middletown and other communities in need. We will monitor our impact by tracking statistics like the number of community members trained to respond to overdoses, the number of naloxone doses administered, and the number of deaths by overdose in Middletown. We will also collect less quantitative information, such as how patient experiences are changed by our efforts.

Our Team

Our core team is comprised of the two of us (Livia Cox and Nick Wells). We are students and EMTs, but more importantly, we are community members. We extend ourselves beyond the Wesleyan campus, working at local health centers, on ambulance services, in hospice facilities, and with refugees in the Middletown community. Currently we are mentored by Makaela Kingsley, and have been accepted as Clinton Global Initiative fellows for the Class of 2020. We are working with Lance Williams and his project "Follow Me Home" to develop a non-medical support system for overdoses in Middletown. We are working with Luis Mendez, a Patient Care Technician at Middlesex Hospital to expand our work globally. We are also mentored by Dr. Howard Boey, an otolaryngologist at Middlesex Hospital who has helped us develop our commitment to action. We are hoping to expand our team through partnerships with Follow Me Home, the Community Health Center, Gilead Community Services, the North End Action Team, and Saint Vincent de Paul.

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/data/statedeaths/drug-overdose-death-2017.html>

² <https://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/opioids/opioid-summaries-by-state/connecticut-opioid-summary>

³ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5753997/>

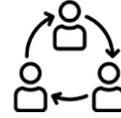
Timeline

Launch



- Reach out to local libraries/health centers to begin collaboration
- Develop naloxone training curriculum
- Begin partnerships with local efforts/pharmacies to source naloxone

Partnerships



- Follow me home collaboration
- Middlesex Hospital Collaboration
- Partnerships with local pharmacies/health centers to enhance naloxone distribution programs



Ideation



- Research problem: How many overdoses are there in CT? Where are they happening? Who is working to prevent them?
- Decide on most effective strategy and begin planning

Ground Work



- Training sessions at Russell Library/other local institutions
- Develop and implement naloxone distribution system in local communities
- Develop and implement progress monitoring system

Expansion



- Recruit and train overdose prevention volunteers
- Reach out to partners overseas and begin researching other communities in need

Budget

Opioid Harm Reduction and Education Initiative: Project Budgets

CURRENT BUDGET	Innovation Fund	\$750
	PCSE Conference Grant	\$1,000
PROJECTED BUDGET	Innovation Fund	\$750
	PCSE Conference Grant	\$500
	PCSE Seed Grant	\$5,000
Total		\$5,750

The Jewett Center for Community Partnerships has awarded us the Innovation Fund, which is included in this budget (with a total adding up to 5,750).

TRAINING	Unit Price	Amount	Total
Narcan (intranasal administration)	\$90	35 doses	\$3,150
CCAR Recovery Coach Academy Tuition	\$850	2 trainees	\$1,700
Venue Rental/Support Staff Compensation	\$100	undetermined	\$100
Total			5,550

We've partnered with a pharmacist who is helping us with the distribution of Narcan and is willing to provide us with discounted boxes of Narcan at \$450 a box (or 90 a dose). We're hoping to initially purchase 35 doses for our first training sessions.

TRANSPORTATION	Projected Cost
Gas and Mileage	\$50
Remaining CGIU Travel Expenses	\$200
Total	\$250

We're fortunate enough to have been invited to the Clinton Global Initiative Conference in Edinburgh in April. The Patricelli Center has kindly supplemented part of our travel expenses, but we're hoping to use a bit of this funding to alleviate remaining travel costs.

Contact Us

lcox01@wesleyan.edu • nwell@wesleyan.edu • mjking@wesleyan.edu