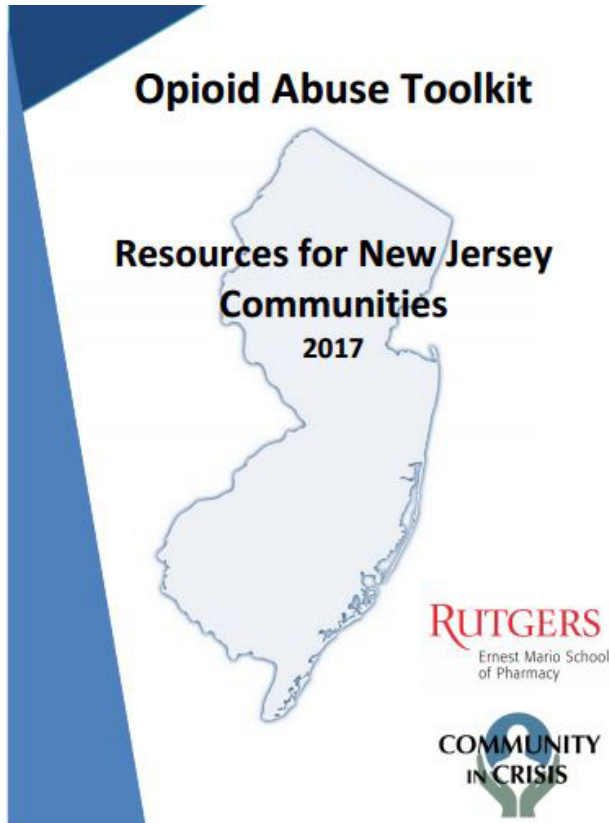


Helping communities tackle the opioid epidemic

3 April 2017, by Dory Devlin



With opioid drug overdoses becoming a growing national health crisis, Rutgers experts have created a toolkit to help communities across New Jersey combat the deadly problem.

Students, faculty and clinicians at the Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy at Rutgers recently launched the Opioid Abuse Toolkit: Resources for New Jersey Communities. This free [toolkit](#) includes a step-by-step guide to plan and execute various community initiatives and provides resources for those struggling with opioid addiction, directly or indirectly.

"We developed this turnkey tool for organizations to use to increase awareness and provide educational resources to address this opioid crisis," said Saira Jan, a Rutgers clinical professor of pharmacy who led the initiative.

In New Jersey, as the opioid epidemic continues to grow, 1,454 people died of drug overdoses in 2015, a 16 percent increase from 2014.

The Rutgers team compiled the toolkit from a number of sources, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), National Institute on Drug Abuse for Teens and Operation Prevention.

"This is an excellent resource for community members who want to help share the best information about opioid abuse prevention and addiction treatment options for people in need," said Brian Strom, chancellor of Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences.

The toolkit also includes supplemental posters and presentations that are available for download at no cost and can be adapted for any community group's needs. They cover topics including:

- increasing awareness through social media
- administering naloxone in cases of overdose
- setting up and advertising for drug take-back events
- providing resources for parents and teens
- training volunteers on the [opioid](#) epidemic

The 49-page toolkit has seven sections, which walk users through event-planning basics, community outreach initiatives, [drug](#) overdose prevention and resources for dealing with addiction, and outreach at schools for all grade levels. With the help of the toolkit, for example, community organizers can plan a "Drug Take-Back Day" with local authorities for

unwanted and unused prescription drugs, educate real estate agents about securing prescription drugs during open house tours, and learn what to do in case of an [opioid overdose](#).

"The pharmacy school aims to increase education about this major health issue with this wide-ranging toolkit," said Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy Dean Joseph Barone.

The toolkit and supplemental posters, presentations, pamphlets and additional resources can be [found on the pharmacy school website](#).

"We want to get as much good information out to as many people in New Jersey as possible," Jan said.

The Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy team partnered with Community in Crisis, a nonprofit organization that works within the Somerset Hills community to fight the heroin/opiate crisis and prevent overdose deaths, to create this toolkit. Community in Crisis's action plan stemmed from a [New Jersey governor's report in 2014](#) on the heroin and opiate epidemic.

The newly released toolkit is one of several Rutgers initiatives focused on addiction prevention and treatment, including free training for New Jersey police departments, continuing education for addiction and behavioral health professionals, and the Recovery House living space for students who are recovering from addiction.

Provided by Rutgers University

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