



MEMORANDUM

Date: June 17, 2022

To: The Honorable Chair and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: Jan Leshner 
County Administrator

Re: **Supervisor Scott's Request for a Summary of Health Department Efforts to Address Suicide, Drug Overdose, and Firearm Related Injuries During the June 7, 2022 Board of Supervisors Meeting**

Introduction

During the last Board of Supervisors' meeting, Mr Mike Humphrey addressed the Board during call to the public on the issue of gun violence prevention. His remarks concluded with a request to create and resource an office within the Health Department, to address accident and injury related morbidity and mortality related to drug misuse, firearm safety, and self-injury among other related topics. At the conclusion of his remarks, Supervisor Scott directed the County Administrator to provide a summary of the Health Department's efforts in these areas.

This memorandum summarizes the programmatic activities of the Health Department relevant to these complex topics.

Community Mental Health and Addiction Prevention Program (CMHA)

Substance misuse as well as accident/injury prevention have been a priority for the Health Department since these topic first emerged in its 2015 Community Health Needs Assessment. However, since 2018, CMHA program has served as the lead entity at the Health Department charged with creating awareness and developing programming to address community mental health needs, including efforts to address suicide prevention and the drug overdose epidemic. This program and its 12 full-time staff currently oversee five grants that variously connect vulnerable populations with available resources, respond to emerging trends, develop and improve communication and coordination across the community, and provide training and resources to the community. Various relevant efforts are summarized below and metrics for many of these activities can be found in the Attachment.

Collaboration

The Health Department, through its many programs, engages various community partners to bring awareness to topics related to mental health, suicide prevention, and substance use.

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It does so by participating in, resourcing, facilitating or otherwise supporting a range of community collaborative efforts. These include: *Medicine Abuse Prevention Initiative Collaborative; Parent Education and Communities of Concern; the Community Prevention Coalition; Medication Assisted Treatment Collaboration; Arizona Opioid Treatment Coalition; Suicide Prevention Taskforce; Drug Seizure Data Taskforce; and Help & Hope 4 Youth.*

Additionally, the Health Department contracts with several agencies across Pima County, including HOPE Inc., Intermountain, Community Bridges Inc., and Tucson Indian Center, to provide linkages to care and outreach to vulnerable populations with complex substance misuse and behavioral treatment needs. The Health Department School Team collaborated with Text, Talk, Act to create a customized application to introduce adolescents to emotional well-being and connecting them with behavioral providers. To date over 1,600 children have received information through this application.

The Health Department works with stakeholders to review, inform and coordinate the community response. One relevant example is the Pima Behavioral Health Coalition supported by the Health Department and funded by the Schools Reopening Grant. The coalition is comprised of 50 local community partners including behavioral health providers, youth-serving agencies, school districts, local jurisdictions, and the State departments of Health and Education. This group:

- Coordinates youth mental health first aid trainings to school staff this summer;
- Developed a universal form to expedite referrals between schools and providers;
- Is developing a common shared directory to facilitate communication between schools and providers;
- Monitors school policies, and identifies new evidence-based models and practices in school-based mental health supports and education;
- Initiated a School Counselor Support Group;
- Established a School Staff Workgroup focused on identifying the needs of school staff; and
- Started a coalition newsletter disseminate resources, news, training and networking opportunities.

Data Synthesis

Understanding local trends and context is critical to guide the Health Department response and to inform community dialogue and decision-making. Using a variety of data sources, CMHA epidemiologist track a spectrum of clinical outcomes including trends in self-harm,

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deaths by suicide, fatal and non-fatal drug overdoses, and neonatal abstinence syndrome. Data are analyzed and visualized using a variety of tools to provide geospatial and socioeconomic context. The team monitors critical indicators to identify specific thresholds for action.

- *Community Alerts* notify community service providers when surveillance thresholds for certain clinical phenomenon (e.g. Fentanyl overdose) are crossed. These alerts multiply the number of messengers able to inform and intervene with at risk populations and connect these with available resources.
- *Survey development and implementation* collects hyper-local data that provides unique community context that informs our work. These efforts provide insight into emerging drug use patterns, assess current levels of knowledge and awareness of specific substances and prevention measures, and identify demographic and geographic trends about the distribution of these activities.
- A *Data Dashboard* is under development to present relevant up-to-date information for use by stakeholders and the public to inform community conversation and policy dialogue.

Overdose Prevention

Community outreach activities to prevent overdoses include:

- *Targeted distribution of Naloxone, Fentanyl test strip and urine toxicology tests* to community-based organizations, local coalitions, healthcare agencies, and members of the public who can reach individuals at risk for overdose;
- *Short-term Public Health Case Management* is available for individuals at risk of overdose in an effort link them with appropriate care;
- *Rapid Response Peer Support* at critical intervention points is provided in a variety of settings and through contracted partners (Hope Inc and CBI);
- The *Overdose Fatality Review* process gathers subject matter experts to perform in-depth analyses of select overdose death in Pima County with the goal of identifying trends, improving system-level cooperation, and informing timely recommendations to reduce overdoses;
- *Overdose prevention trainings* are broadly available across the community and cover a range of topics, including:
 - *Chronic Pain Self-Management*;

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- *Training* to identify and respond to an opioid overdose including the use of Narcan;
- *Rx360* to increase clinician awareness about prescription drug misuse and abuse;
- *Rise of Fentanyl*, to increase community awareness of the dangers of this drug;
- *Strengthening Families Program*, an upstream strategy that strengthens protective factors in an effort to reduce substance misuse in children;
- *Dispose-A-Med* is a collaborative initiative that promotes safe storage and use of prescription medication and links to the Sheriff's "Drug Take Back" events;
- *Health Department Clinics* provide overdose prevention counseling and referral Medication Assisted Treatment;
- *Media Campaigns* including "One Pill can Kill," "How to Identify and Opioid Overdose," and "Naloxone Saves Lives" increase community awareness of overdose risk associated with substance misuse; and
- PIMAHHELPLINE.ORG helps connect with individuals and families with mental health and substance misuse services.

Firearm Violence Prevention

The *Gun Violence and Firearm Workgroup* is a new collaboration that began in 2022 that aims to reduce gun violence related injuries in Pima County. The effort involves law enforcement, gun shops, emergency departments, schools, victim's services, probation services, Pascua Yaqui Tribe, and Pima County Justice Services. The group focuses on firearm safety and security, training for gun owners, public health messaging about firearms, and addressing common myths associated with firearm injuries/deaths.

Trigger Locks distribution will increase in the very near future with funding from the Arizona Department of Health. This initiative supports outreach and education campaigns in the community about firearm safety. As part of that effort, the Health Department will distribute 4,000 gunlocks at Pima County clinics, libraries, recreation centers, medical offices and community-based organizations in the near future. The gunlocks will come with bilingual messages about firearm safety and the National Suicide Prevention Hotline.

Future Suicide Prevention Activities

The Health Department recently submitted a grant application focused on suicide prevention in disproportionately impacted populations in Pima County. If awarded, this grant would

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expand our services and build community capacity through multiple pathways. This includes resourcing the *QPR Gatekeeper Training for Suicide Prevention* to teach individuals how to recognize and respond to warning signs of a suicide crisis. It would also support a Suicide Mortality Review that gathers subject matter experts to investigate suicide cases that have occurred in Pima County. Modeled on the overdose mortality review process, this group will report key trends and identify recommendations to turn data into action, including strengthening prevention strategies, improving system-level cooperation, informing local community stakeholders, and ultimately reducing suicides through these and other interventions.

Other Important Contributors

It is important to acknowledge, the significant actions of the Sheriff and the County Attorney to reduce the risk of self and interpersonal injury resulting from the misuse of substances and firearms. Likewise, various County Departments including the Office of the Medical Examiner, the Library and departments of Transportation, Fleet Services, Behavioral Health, Human Resources, Facilities Management and even Risk Management make important contributions physical and emotional safety in this community. It is beyond the scope of the request to inventory such efforts in any meaningful detail.

JKL/dym

Attachment

- c: The Honorable Laura Conover, Pima County Attorney
- The Honorable Chris Nanos, Pima County Sheriff
- Francisco García, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator for Health and Community Services & Chief Medical Officer
- Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator for Public Works
- Terry Cullen, MD, MS, Public Health Director, Health Department

ATTACHMENT

Activity	Metrics YTD (1/1/2022 – 6/10/2022)	n
Collaborations		
Meetings with Stakeholders	# of meetings attended	111
Epidemiology		
Health Alerts	# of overdose health alerts distributed	2
	# of suicide overdose health alerts distributed	1
Surveillance	# of surveillance meetings completed	4
Narcan Distribution		
Distribution	# of Narcan distributed	2975
Overdose Reversals	# of Narcan doses used to reverse an overdose by report	25
Mortality/Fatality Reviews		
Suicide Mortality Review	# of committee meetings held	2
	# of cases reviewed	10
Overdose Fatality Review	# of committee meetings held	2
	# of cases reviewed	11
Case Management Services		
Encounters	# of encounters	572
	# of individuals who received services	465
Rapid Response Peer Navigators		
Encounters	# of encounters from HOPE Inc.	182
	# of encounters from CBI	56
Trainings		
Chronic Pain Self-Management Program	# of training sessions	1
	# of participants	8
Narcan Training	# of training sessions	23
	# of participants	1095
Rx360	# of training sessions	5
	# of participants	767
Strengthening Families Program	# of training sessions	11
	# of participants	14
Mental Health First Aid	# of training sessions	2
	# of participants	42
NAMI Ending the Silence	# of training sessions	1
	# of participants	30
Stress Management	# of training sessions	5
	# of participants	93
QPR Gatekeeper Training	# of training sessions	4
	# of participants	4
Tabling Events		
Community Events	# of events attended	8
	# of Narcan distributed at community events	166