Drug Addiction
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What is Drug Addiction?

Drug addiction is often thought of as being caused by poor judgement, lack of willpower or simply bad behavior; however, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, drug addiction is defined as:

"a chronic, relapsing brain disease that is characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use, despite harmful consequences."

Like other types of disease that affect the structure and function of different parts of the body, the disease of drug addiction alters the normal functioning of the brain. These complex changes can lead to compulsive behaviors that impair a person’s self-control and hamper his/her impulse to use drugs.

Why is drug addiction a problem in our community?

In Clermont County, drug addiction has had a significant impact on individuals, families, and our community:

- Clermont County has the 10th highest overdose rate of the 88 counties in Ohio
- Drug poisoning hospitalizations occurred at a rate of 44 per 100,000 which is double the state rate
- Nearly half of the children removed from their homes in 2013 were the result of caregiver drug use in the home
- The court system and law enforcement agencies are heavily burdened with drug-related cases
- The health risks associated with drug addiction are many, and include hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and HIV/AIDS
- The National Institute on Drug Abuse estimates costs associated with illicit drug use are $181 billion dollars annually
What can we do to address the problem?

Drug addiction is a complex problem, involving not only the individuals with substance use disorders, but their families, friends, and the community as a whole. Increasing awareness of drug addiction as a health issue is a key step in addressing the problem in our county. Additional measures include:

- **Increasing Advocacy** by raising community awareness of opiate abuse, addiction as a health issue, and the need for funding to support treatment.
- **Reducing Supply** through law enforcement efforts, proper medication disposal, and regulation of opiate prescribing.
- **Increasing Treatment** including use of SBIRT by physicians, medication-assisted treatment, and recovery support.
- **Reducing Harm** by promoting use of prescription drop boxes, educating physicians about OARRS, and increasing awareness of referral resources.
- **Preventing Use** through education of traditional and non-traditional partners, and support of coalition efforts.

*SBIRT - The Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral program is a public health approach to delivery of early intervention and treatment to individuals with, or at risk of developing, substance use disorders.

*OARRS - The Ohio Automated Rx Reporting System is an online system that allows prescribers to check and see if patients are potentially abusing prescription drugs, or are obtaining prescriptions from multiple providers that could cause adverse reactions.

Community Snapshots

SOLACE (Surviving Our Loss and Continuing Everyday) is a program located in Clermont County to support and assist families affected by substance addiction. Additional information on this program is available at: www.drugfreeclermont.org/solace.html.

In Clermont County, treatment resources for individuals with substance use disorders include Clermont Recovery Center (CRC), Northland, The Ridge, and Teen Challenge.
GOAL 1: Minimize/eliminate substance abuse, addiction, distribution, overdose and death in Clermont County through increased awareness, education, advocacy, and treatment.

OBJECTIVE 1.1: By August 2019, decrease by 50% the number of unintentional drug overdoses in Clermont County.

STRATEGY 1.1.1: Increase awareness of, and education about, addiction and unintentional drug overdose in Clermont County.

1. **Activity:** Develop and distribute educational information utilizing multiple media outlets regarding issues related to unintentional drug overdose (i.e., signs and symptoms of addiction, prevention measures, treatment options, perception/stigma associated with drug addiction) and injury surveillance data.

2. **Activity:** Provide education targeted at healthcare providers to promote utilization of the OARRS and SBIRT programs.

3. **Activity:** Propose collaboration with UC East Nursing Program to provide students education about the SBIRT program.

4. **Activity:** Educate community members about the purpose and availability of prescription drug drop boxes to increase their utilization, and promotion of Drug Take Back days in Clermont County.

5. **Activity:** Provide prevention programs in schools, housing units and institutions, conduct awareness activities and community events, and provide outreach to women through CRC.
6 Activity:
Increase the number of drug drop boxes throughout Clermont County.

7 Activity:
Educate the general public and non-traditional partners (e.g., real estate companies, faith-based organizations and workplaces) about drug diversion and drug abuse, to include use of the Monitor, Secure and Dispose Campaign.

8 Activity:
Advocate for funding directed at the prevention of and treatment for drug addiction.

9 Activity:
Promote continuation and expansion of the Clermont County Opiate Task Force.

10 Activity:
Provide substance use prevention education to Clermont County students utilizing the Project Alert and Lions Quest programs through Clermont County Community Services.
1. **Activity:**
   Expansion of Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) through Clermont Recovery Center (CRC).

2. **Activity:**
   Evaluation of policy change at CRC to allow walk-in visits for initial assessment in place of scheduled appointments.

3. **Activity:**
   Promotion and expansion of the Community Alternative Sentencing Center (CASC).

4. **Activity:**
   Implementation of a Narcan distribution program.
GOAL 2  Increase awareness and reduce infectious disease risks of HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C through education, testing, vaccination and referral for care.

OBJECTIVE 2.1  By August 2019, increase the proportion of persons who are aware of their HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C status, and decrease the number of new hepatitis C infections by 25%.

STRATEGY 2.1.1  Increase awareness of HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C risks through education, and promote testing, treatment and vaccination to the general public and healthcare providers.

Activity:

Promote free, anonymous hepatitis C and HIV testing at Clermont County Public Health and Clermont County Recovery Center (CRC) to the public and healthcare providers.

Activity:

Mail hepatitis B and C educational materials, and information about hepatitis A and B vaccine program to individuals with positive hepatitis B and C lab tests, and encourage follow up with primary care provider.

Activity:

Collaborate with addiction treatment facilities in Clermont County to encourage vaccination with hepatitis A and B vaccine, as appropriate, for participants who test positive for hepatitis B and C.
Activity:
Create referral list for hepatitis C treatment services.

Activity:
Provide education to healthcare providers regarding hepatitis C testing and treatment.

Activity:
Conduct feasibility study for a needle exchange program in Clermont County.

Activity:
Utilize multiple media formats to disseminate public health messages about HIV and hepatitis B and C.