Overview

Clermont County Public Health (CCPH), in collaboration with the Clermont County Opiate Task Force (OTF), has worked diligently to promote drug overdose prevention efforts, increase access to naloxone and access to treatment. There were 96 unintentional drug overdose deaths among Clermont County residents in 2016, compared to a record-high 105 in 2015 (Ohio Department of Health, 2016 Ohio Drug Overdose Data). Although the number of unintentional overdose deaths among Ohioans statewide increased for the seventh straight year in 2016, Clermont County saw a slight decline for the first time since 2009. Additionally, for the first half of 2017 (January through June) there were 30 overdose deaths that occurred in Clermont County which would result in a significantly reduced number of deaths in 2017 should this trend hold as the remainder of 2017 deaths are tabulated.

While the number of overdose deaths decreased slightly, Clermont County’s unintentional overdose death rate remains one of the highest in Ohio. The age-adjusted death rate from 2011-2016 was 39.5 deaths per 100,000 population ranking fourth highest in the state behind only Montgomery (42.5), Butler (40.5) and Brown (41.0) counties. In 2015, Clermont County had the third highest overdose death rate in Ohio.

“While there is still much work to be done, and one overdose death is too many, the slight decrease in the unintentional opioid overdose deaths in Clermont County for 2016 shows we are moving in a positive direction,”
- Lee Ann Watson, Ph.D., Associate Director of the Clermont County Mental Health and Recovery Board and co-chair of the Clermont County Opiate Task Force
Collaboration and Coalition Support for PDO Activities

**Clermont County Opiate Task Force**

Over the past several years, multiple Clermont County agencies have been working tirelessly to combat the rise in unintentional drug overdose fatalities occurring in our community. In 2013 the Clermont County Opiate Task Force (OTF), in collaboration with Clermont County Public Health (CCPH) and Clermont County Mental Health and Recovery Board, developed a strategic response plan which includes efforts for prevention, harm reduction, supply reduction and treatment. The Clermont County Opiate Task Force includes representatives from several local government agencies, courts, law enforcement, fire and EMS agencies, support and recovery groups, healthcare professionals, treatment facilities and private citizens.

The Clermont County Opiate Task Force held 11 meetings in 2017 with an average attendance of 30 members per meeting. Presentations were given to OTF members on a variety of topics including treatment, prevention, syringe services programs, and naloxone administration.

One notable addition to the OTF in 2017 is participation from Mercy Health Clermont Hospital, the only hospital and emergency department within Clermont County. Representatives from Mercy Health Clermont Hospital have taken an active role in collaborating on several projects, including serving as co-chair of the OTF Treatment Subcommittee.

**Community Collective Impact Model For Change**

In Fall 2017, CCPH began participation in the Community Collective Impact Model for Change (CCIM4C) initiative led by Clermont County Mental Health and Recovery Board thanks to funding from Ohio Mental Health and Addiction Services. The CCIM4C initiative is a collaborative framework that combines aspects of multiple evidence-based and data driven approaches to assist with developing solutions that will successfully address the opioid epidemic within our community. This initiative will provide the OTF and our community with a strategy directed toward shared concerns, guiding members through working together toward common goals focused on improving and enhancing community well-being. Participation in the initiative will continue through the first half of 2018.
Activities and Impacts in 2017

**Overdose Data Tool**

Clermont County Public Health, in collaboration with Hamilton County Public Health, released an interactive web-based tool, known as the Overdose Data Tool, in October 2017 to aid in reducing drug overdoses. The tool, updated daily, provides information about the number of overdoses presenting to Mercy Health Clermont Hospital and 911 dispatches due to overdose in Clermont County. It also includes information from hospitals in other counties if the person who overdosed lives in Clermont County. Users can further dissect the data by viewing charts and graphs for overdoses by home location, hospital location, gender, and age.

The Overdose Data Tool is available to the public thanks to a partnership with Hamilton County Public Health, and the Funder’s Response to the Heroin Epidemic (FRHE), which provided the financial support for the project.

**Overdose Fatality Review**

The Overdose Fatality Review (OFR) Board met twice in 2017. The OFR Board reviews cases that occurred in Clermont County despite the individual’s county of residence. Aggregate data for unintentional overdose deaths that occurred in Clermont County in 2016 (n=82) were presented to the Opiate Task Force in May 2017. Data for cases occurring January through June 2017 (n=30) were presented to the Overdose Fatality Review Board in December 2017.

According to the CDC, abuse of prescription opioids is a key risk factor for heroin and fentanyl use. Prescription opioids (including fentanyl and related drugs) were present in 20 out of the 23 cases that received a toxicology screen. Eighteen cases were positive for fentanyl making it the most common of all substances present, not just opioids. At this time the toxicology results do not delineate between prescription and illicit fentanyl.

**Presence of Rx Opioids in Toxicology Results, Jan.-June 2017**

- Buprenorphine (1)
- Fentanyl (18)
- Hydrocodone (2)
- Morphine/Codeine (11)
- Other (11)
- Oxycodone (2)

Note: Data labels indicate number of cases where substance was present, therefore the total count is higher than total case count.
Quick Response Teams (QRT) were formed to respond to non-fatal drug overdoses in Union Township in January 2017 and the Clermont County Sheriff’s Office in September 2017. Quick Response Teams are comprised of law enforcement, first responders, and recovery coaches who work together to provide a collaborative response to opioid users and their families following a non-fatal overdose. A QRT capitalizes on the “recovery window” – a period shortly following an opioid overdose when people who are addicted are open to intervention. The QRT encourages the individuals to seek treatment, and works to remove barriers and obstacles that may come up as they engage in the treatment system.

The Clermont County OTF aims to have active QRTs in every part of the county, but in the meantime there is a referral system in place and the Sheriff’s Office QRT will respond countywide.

Syringe Services Program

During 2017 Clermont County Public Health made strides in the development of a syringe services program that is proposed to begin in 2018. The SSP in Clermont County will be a collaborative effort between CCPH, Mercy Health Clermont Hospital, Hamilton County Public Health, and the Exchange Project. A mobile van will be stationed in the Mercy Health Clermont Hospital parking lot one half-day per week to provide the services. Syringe Services Programs (SSPs) are comprehensive harm reduction programs that include exchanging sterile syringes, proper disposal of contaminated equipment, education for prevention of infection, testing for HIV and hepatitis C, naloxone provision, and referral to substance use disorder treatment.

CCPH consulted with several interested parties within the county including: law enforcement, the County Prosecutor, representatives from community addiction services providers, Clermont County Mental Health and Recovery Board, and representatives from Batavia Township. CCPH invited community members to provide feedback on the proposed SSP at a public forum held on November 30, 2017. Feedback was also accepted through an anonymous online survey. Presentations were given by CCPH, Hamilton County Public Health, and Mercy Health at the public forum. The Clermont County Board of Health formally approved the adoption of a syringe services program on December 13, 2017.
Environmental, Systems and Healthcare Changes

**SBIRT & OARRS at Mercy Health Clermont Hospital**
Mercy Health Clermont Hospital implemented SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment) using the Emergency Department as a pilot. Staff were trained on how to properly screen and refer patients with substance use disorder to treatment. Due to the success of the pilot program, SBIRT is now being used at all Mercy Health East Market facilities. Additionally, 100 percent of Mercy Health Clermont Hospital physicians use the Ohio Automated Rx Reporting System (OARRS) through the EPIC system.

- **# of SBIRT screenings at Mercy Clermont Hospital, 2017**: 5,741
- **# of SBIRT brief interventions for drug use at Mercy Clermont Hospital, 2017**: 377
- **# of SBIRT referrals to treatment for drug use at Mercy Clermont Hospital, 2017**: 239

**SBIRT data provided by Mercy Health, 1/5/2018**

**Drug Drop Boxes**
Three new permanent drug drop box locations were added (Mercy Health Clermont Hospital, Mercy Health Anderson Hospital, and Milford Police Department) for a total of 10 permanent locations available to Clermont County Residents. Drug drop box magnets and flyers were distributed at multiple community events to promote the availability of the drop boxes and their locations.

- **Pounds of drugs collected at drug drop box sites in Clermont County, 2017**: 1,381

CCPH and the OTF promoted the Spring and Fall DEA Drug Take Back days through their websites, social media, and distribution of flyers to each of the 10 Clermont County Public Library Branches.

CCPH provided locking medication storage boxes to more than 200 members of the community throughout 2017.
Education, Training and Professional Development

Get Clean Now Clermont Website Launch

In February 2017 the Opiate Task Force launched their website – www.getcleannowclermont.org – aimed at assisting individuals with a substance use disorder, their loved ones, healthcare providers and the residents of Clermont County who are seeking information about the opiate epidemic and its impact in the county.

Since the website launched in February 2017 there have been more than 3,200 unique page views. Following the landing page, the resources page has the most views thus far. Clermont County Public Health and Facebook are the top referrals for traffic on the Get Clean Now Clermont website.

Materials outlining safe medication storage and disposal guidelines were developed and distributed to real estate agents and funeral home directors in Clermont County. The materials outline the importance of proper medication storage and disposal specific to their clients’ interests, information on how to receive a locking medication storage box from CCPH, and a list of permanent drug drop boxes in the community. Prescription drug overdose awareness materials were distributed throughout 2017 at several community events including the county fair, five National Night Out events, and Monroe Township Safety Day.

Several resources have been added to the CCPH and the OTF website for healthcare providers to enhance prescribing practices and educate their patients. Additionally, information and training for OARRS and SBIRT are now available. A letter announcing the website and available resources was sent to healthcare providers county-wide, including dentists, in October 2017. The website is expected to reach more Clermont County residents and healthcare providers in the coming months as a result of a marketing campaign promoting the website that took place from October through December 2017.

CCPH developed quarterly Poison Drug Overdose Newsletters in 2017. The newsletters are posted to the CCPH and OTF websites and social media pages. Content covers updates on PDO grant program and OTF activities and general information surrounding the opioid epidemic at the state and national level.

Safe Medication Storage and Disposal

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Media Outreach Efforts

Clermont County Public Health and the OTF promoted prescription drug overdose awareness through use of their website and social media pages. In August 2017 the OTF began monthly Facebook Live sessions covering various topics related to the overdose epidemic in the community and video views have continuously increased each subsequent month. CCPH developed five news releases resulting in several news articles published, news station coverage, and a radio interview with NPR.

Advertisements promoting the OTF Get Clean Now Clermont website were displayed throughout the county on eleven billboards, two Eastgate Mall directories, and on the sides of several Clermont Transportation Connection buses. Additionally, the Clermont Sun and the Community Press newspapers both ran ¼ page color advertisements for two weeks, and a 15-second ad was included in the pre-show reel at the Milford Cinemark theatre for eight weeks. Two Kroger Pharmacy locations (Amelia and Milford-Mulberry) will each be distributing 24,000 pharmacy bags printed with the Get Clean Now Clermont website and a list of permanent drug drop box locations.

Additional Activities

**CCPH Earns Accreditation**

CCPH has achieved national accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). The accreditation program works to improve the quality and performance of the nation’s public health departments. The national accreditation program is supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. To become accredited, an agency must show that they meet or exceed a set of standards, by going through a self-assessment, and a peer review.

During the process, CCPH conducted a Community Health Assessment and created a Community Health Improvement Plan and a strategic plan to help identify the biggest health threats to the community and help guide the direction of the agency in the future.

“Throughout the process we were able to analyze our programs and services and improve in many areas, which will benefit the citizens of Clermont County,” said Julianne Nesbit, Health Commissioner, CCPH.