

Opiate Problem – 5-31-16

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Most have now read about or heard about the problems related to opiate/heroin addiction in Ashland County. Public awareness seems to be increasing about this serious problem. The Times-Gazette had reported about local overdose deaths in 2016. According to the Coroner's office there were 11 unintentional drug overdose deaths in 2014 and 2015. Sadly the toll appears to be continuing in 2016.

First, I would like to extend A.C.C.A.D.A.'s condolences to those who have lost loved ones. The pain and sadness that they are experiencing is beyond comprehension for most of us.

Anyone needing services for addiction should contact A.C.C.A.D.A. (Ashland County Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse) at 419-289-7675. We have been working with the Regional Center for Opiate Recovery. It provides inpatient detox and when appropriate can place the opiate addict on medication to support treatment and recovery. An affiliation with this agency was developed by the Mental Health and Recovery Board of Ashland County. State funds directed by the MHRB provided resources to start the service in Massillon. With the extension of Medicaid to low income adults this has increased access to this kind of treatment.

A.C.C.A.D.A. provides outpatient treatment and supports recovering addicts in their recovery. We have begun working with clients who are using a promising new drug called Vivitrol. No medication is a panacea for addiction but medications can aid in the individuals personal recovery.

A.C.C.A.D.A. is planning a series of articles to spotlight this problem and describe community efforts to impact the opiate epidemic. It should also be mentioned that alcohol continues to be a problem for many. Alcohol related deaths usually involve automobile accidents or other kinds of accidents related to intoxication. There are a many alcohol related diseases such as cirrhosis, cardiovascular disease, depression and others. While the current awareness effort will focus on

opiate addiction, we need to be aware there a number of other drugs that can lead to addiction.

A.C.C.A.D.A. also provides prevention education to a number of area schools. Ultimately to deal with this problem our community must provide our young people with the education and skills to avoid making the decisions that lead to chemical abuse and addiction.

A.C.C.A.D.A. and others are in the planning stages of having another summit to focus on efforts to find solutions to the current epidemic of opioid abuse. That will be announced at a later date.

Please look for future articles.

A.C.C.A.D.A. is a contract agency of the Mental Health and Recovery Board of Ashland County and a partner agency of the United Way of Ashland.