

## The Opioid Epidemic – Project Paper:

**Audience:** The audience for this project was families in Washington State (primarily teens and adults), as well as communities that are affected most by this opioid epidemic: including both urban and rural populations, and racially diverse groups such as White, Black, and Hispanic residents.

We make this message for the audience by:

- Using understandable language and a call to action towards parents and teenagers, emphasizing the key steps to save Washington opioid crisis: like safe storage, open conversations and naloxone use.
- We added highlighted real-life stories and data to make the risk relatable and urgent.
- We addressed cultural and informational barriers by showing disparities in the racial effect by opioid overdose deaths. Particularly for White, Black and Hispanic communities who have seen a higher percentage in increase in overdose deaths. This is usually due to health care access and the need for responsive treatment.
- We also incorporated data visualizations and personal stories to engage both by the data and emotionally move the audience.

## Equity Impact:

This project shows equity by:

- Showing disparities in opioid overdose rates between urban and rural counties with our data visualization where you can click on all the counties that the SURDORS (State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System) has data for. We also mention racial and gender groups. Where the Rural area often lacks treatment centers and access to medication like naloxone. While Black and Hispanic communities face systemic barriers to health care and culture support.
- Promoting resources that are accessible no matter location or family background, such as safe medication storage, and public awareness donations.
- Donations to support expanding access to treatment and prevention in underserved areas.

## Health Impact and Social Significance:

- This brings attention to the abrupt rise in opioid-related deaths in Washington, especially due to fentanyl, and the demographic of those affected also mentioning age.
- This approach is innovated in its interactivity in data visualization, personal stories and actionable steps, making the information both credible and also compelling.
- By focusing on both prevention (educating, safe storage, early conversations) and harm reduction (naloxone access and treatment resources), the project also shows broad

implication for reducing overdose deaths and changing community norms around opioid use.

- The project's emphasis on the audience with an easily accessible website increases its potential for positive change and it also addresses the causes of the disparities and not just the symptoms.

#### Reflection on Process:

#### Topic Selection and Approach:

The topic was chosen due to the urgency and increasing impact of opioid misuse especially as the country we live in (King County) is having a significant increase in this scary epidemic. The approach was made by looking at some news, successful public health campaigns and discussing this crisis at school, and with the interest of our counties problems we also wanted to deep dive into both urban and rural communities.

#### Challenges:

- Going through complex data to create a clear, actionable message for our diverse audience.
- Ensuring that we mention cultural relevance and accessibility as some counties are not fortunate with proper treatment centers.
- The balance between stories and factual accuracy

#### Assistance Received:

- We got feedback from our peers and mentors on our message
- We used state health department resources and data dashboards for the most recent statistics
- We got inspiration from existing campaigns and PSAs related to opioid crisis.

#### Reflect on Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

We did not use any AI-generated content. We use original analysis and our own creative direction; and we used our respective search engines to find our data and resources while drafting. All our final decisions were our own, with credit given for the work cited.

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