

OPIOID ABUSE INDICATORS



CONTEXT

The rise in opioid addiction is being addressed both statewide and locally in Arlington. The Arlington Addiction Recovery Initiative (AARI) was formed in 2017 as a collaborative public-private effort to address the increase in drug overdose and to facilitate a county-wide response. More information is available on the AARI website www.onearlington.org. In 2018, Virginia mandated that health education programs at public elementary and secondary schools include age-appropriate instruction on the safe use and risks of abuse of prescription drugs. Arlington Public Schools (APS) has been including this information in its K-10 health curriculum, but the mandate should help to strengthen and extend the initiative.

Prompted in part by AARI's work, Arlington now has four secure drug take-back boxes where unused, unwanted, or expired prescription medications can be deposited anonymously 24 hours a day. Arlington is also training

families and individuals impacted by opioids on the administration of Naloxone, a medication that can reverse an opioid overdose. Anyone who has been prescribed an opioid painkiller should have Naloxone readily available.

FINDINGS

Signs of opioid abuse and overdose are surfacing with youth, even those under 14, based on visits to emergency departments.¹ Youth ages 15-24 are being seen for opioid overdoses at a rate nearly 3 times other age groups.² In Arlington, overdose deaths for youth spiked in 2014, but have since leveled off. Yet these findings indicate that opioid abuse is still very much an issue for youth and their families in Arlington.

Five percent of Arlington youth report misusing prescription opioids. This issue cuts across age, income, and geographic location. Of those youth who report misusing opioids, 70% started when they were 14 or younger.¹

On the 2017 YRBS, 5% of high school youth in Arlington self-reported misusing prescription opioids.¹

Youth who misused prescription pain medication most commonly reported that it was their own prescription.¹

ARLINGTON OPIOID ABUSE INDICATORS, BY AGE, 2017 ²						
	0-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Fentanyl and/or Heroin Overdose Death	0.0	4.2	10.4	15.6	6.8	13.1
Prescription Opioid Overdose Death	0.0	4.2	5.2	5.2	0.0	13.1
Emergency Dept. Visits for Heroin Overdose	0.0	8.5	13.8	2.6	3.4	26.2
Emergency Dept. Visits for Opioid Overdose	19.7	114.5	34.6	46.7	37.5	34.9
Narcan Administration	0.0	33.9	45.0	41.5	37.5	56.7