





County of Fairfax, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 15, 2022

TO: Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
Fairfax County School Board Members

FROM: Bryan J. Hill
County Executive 

Scott S. Brabrand, Ed.D.
Superintendent, Fairfax County Public Schools

SUBJECT: Youth Nonfatal Overdoses

Local data on fatal and nonfatal opioid overdoses in the Fairfax Health District has been trending higher in 2021, which is consistent with national and state trends.¹ Individuals of all ages are impacted by the opioid epidemic in the Fairfax Health District, with the 18-34 age range having the highest rates of fatal and nonfatal overdoses in the Fairfax Health District in recent years.

Recently we have had a concerning number of nonfatal overdoses involving youth ages 15-17 in the Richmond Highway Corridor that have come to the attention of the Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD). Notably, many of these nonfatal overdoses involve Hispanic youth, some of whom are newcomers to the community. Illicit pills are the primary substance involved, and it is suspected, though not verified by lab tests, that these pills include fentanyl (such pills are commonly known as pressed pills and are prevalent in communities across the country, including Fairfax). While these overdoses have occurred in one part of the County, the opioid epidemic impacts youth and families throughout our County.

For your awareness, this memo provides information on the efforts that multiple County agencies and Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) are working on through the Fairfax County Opioid and Substance Use Task Force to connect youth and families with treatment and support services. Because of the Boards' longstanding commitment to addressing the opioid epidemic, the Task Force's multi-pronged strategy involving about 30 programs/activities provides the foundation for a timely, tailored response. One example is the Substance Abuse Prevention Specialists (SAPS) program, a partnership between FCPS, Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court (JDRDC), and the Community Services Board (CSB) which provides substance use prevention, education, and intervention services to youth and their parents.

¹ Fatal overdose data for October – December 2021 is expected to be released by the Virginia Office of the Chief Medical Examiner in April 2022.

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**Board of Supervisors and School Board
Youth Nonfatal Overdoses
Page 2 of 2**

Specific activities underway to amplify and tailor support services and community engagement/awareness include:

- FCPD's Overdose Investigation Unit (OIU) investigating and apprehending the sources of supply associated with overdoses in the County.
- Exploring expanded Narcan (the medication that reverses opioid overdoses) availability for FCPS staff (currently, FCPD School Resource Officers carry Narcan, but other school personnel do not).
- Working to connect parents with the CSB and FCPS SAPS for treatment services for the youth as appropriate.
- Providing information to the impacted families on family peer support services and Revive! Training (on how to recognize and reverse an overdose), both of which are available in English and Spanish.
- Assessing the continuum of regional substance use treatment options for youth and implementing strategies to fill the identified gaps.
- Seeking feedback from the impacted families to help inform response efforts.
- Engaging local nonprofits to assist in reaching community members.
- Planning for a community event(s) and messaging to raise awareness of the dangers associated with illicit pills and substances and the many early intervention and treatment resources available, both through FCPS and County agencies.
- Providing ongoing targeted substance abuse prevention messaging to youth.

If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact [Ellen Volo](#), Opioid and Substance Use Task Force Coordinator, at 703-324-7073 or [Stefan Mascoll](#), Fairfax County Public Schools, Coordinator of Student Safety and Wellness, at 571-423-4270.

cc:

Tom Arnold, Deputy County Executive
Christopher A. Leonard, Deputy County Executive
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Michelle Boyd, Assistant Superintendent, FCPS
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Kevin Davis, Chief, Police Department
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Lisa Potter, Diversion Initiatives Director, Fairfax-Falls Church CSB
Matt Thompson, Director of the Court Service Unit, JDRDC
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