

Opioid and tobacco use have created a dual health crisis in Indiana. While the state has taken important steps to address these epidemics, they still claim thousands of Hoosier lives and cost billions of dollars each year.

- In 2017, more than **1,700 Hoosiers** died from a drug overdose, an all-time high and a **75% increase** since 2011.



- Tobacco use is **seven times as deadly**, causing more than **12,500 premature deaths** in Indiana every year.



Indiana taxpayers and businesses **pay more than \$8.3 billion annually** in healthcare costs and lost productivity due to tobacco consumption and secondhand smoke. In 2017, the state's opioid epidemic added another **\$4.3 billion** in economic damages.



Tobacco and opioid use are **two leading root causes** of Indiana's poor health rankings and affect all Hoosiers—either by impacting their health or their wallets. These two public health challenges can only be effectively addressed with action by all stakeholders, and prevention is a key part of the solution. Indiana's K-12 schools can tackle opioid and tobacco use by pursuing a number of proven strategies.

Recommendations for Addressing Opioid Misuse

- **Implementing evidence-based prevention programs:** K-12 schools are a crucial setting for preventing opioid misuse among youth. Proven prevention programs that have strong evidence of success in reducing substance use should be implemented in Indiana schools. Such programs generally focus on teaching students personal and social skills, including problem-solving, decision-making and coping methods for stress, to help avoid opioid misuse. These programs may also teach techniques to improve self-esteem, self-control and assertiveness, and discuss methods to resist peer pressure or media influences. A list of evidence-based programs developed by the Indiana Prevention Resource Center, aligned with Indiana's academic standards, can be found at www.rmff.org/preventionmatters.
- **Supporting students and families suffering from substance use disorder (SUD):** K-12 schools should implement approaches to serving both students and parents dealing with SUD issues through family-based programs or school-based health clinics.
- **Training school staff and making naloxone available:** All school employees and adults working with high school athletic programs should be educated in the risks related to SUD and how to refer students for appropriate help if issues are identified. School nurses should have access to naloxone in case an overdose occurs on campus.

Recommendations for Curbing Tobacco Use

- **Implementing evidence-based prevention programs:** As is the case for opioid misuse, K-12 schools are a crucial setting for preventing tobacco use—including e-cigarette use—among youth. Proven prevention programs that have strong evidence of success in reducing substance use should be implemented in Indiana schools. Such programs generally focus on teaching students personal and social skills, including problem-solving, decision-

making and coping methods for stress, to help avoid tobacco use. These programs may also teach techniques to improve self-esteem, self-control and assertiveness, and discuss methods to resist peer pressure or media influences. A list of evidence-based programs developed by the Indiana Prevention Resource Center, aligned with Indiana’s academic standards, can be found at www.rmff.org/preventionmatters.

Sources

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John Tauras, Ph.D., Frank Chaloupka, Ph.D., and Paul Halverson, Dr.PH. *Report on the Tobacco Epidemic in Marion County and Indiana and Effective Solutions: 2018 Update*. October 2018.