



Center for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention

SKAGGS SCHOOL OF PHARMACY AND PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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New Fentanyl Awareness Campaign Skips Judgment to Land Safety Message

Launching on International Overdose Awareness Day, August 31, "Keep The Party Safe" promotes ways to stay safe and save lives

[August 31, 2022] Denver, Co. – The [Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention](#) (Consortium) today launches "[Keep The Party Safe](#)," an eye-catching new education and awareness effort to prevent or reverse fentanyl overdoses. The launch of the judgment-free campaign is timed with [International Overdose Awareness Day](#), Aug. 31, a day to remember without stigmatizing those who have died from overdoses.

Fentanyl, a synthetic opioid, continues to contaminate recreational drugs across Colorado, causing or contributing to [912 deaths in 2021](#). Fentanyl is 50 times stronger than heroin, which means overdoses happen faster and are more likely to be deadly. "When recreational drugs are tainted with fentanyl, it's very hard for people to know it's there—it can make anyone vulnerable to an overdose," explains Consortium executive director Dr. Robert Valuck. "Our new campaign speaks to the reality of fentanyl-laced drugs circulating in our communities while empowering our audiences to take steps to protect themselves and their friends from overdose."

[Keep The Party Safe](#) uses nightlife-inspired artwork and references to grab attention just long enough to indicate: 'We're not here to judge. We're here to keep you safe.' Starting in September, campaign placements will appear in entertainment settings across the state and on social media to encourage Coloradans to create a checklist for a safer night out:

- **B.Y.O.N: Bring Your Own Naloxone** (a medication that rapidly reverses an opioid overdose)
- **Before the party**, designate a non-user
- **Know the signs** of an overdose
- **Have fentanyl test strips available** to test for fentanyl contamination
- As soon as you spot an overdose, **call 911 and use naloxone**.

Addressing A Public Health Crisis

The University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus is home to the Consortium, established nearly a decade ago to coordinate the State's response to the public health crisis of drug misuse

and abuse. The Consortium has made a meaningful impact in partnership with nonprofits, government agencies, and providers statewide, and leads efforts to battle the fentanyl spike.

“This new effort underscores our commitment to address the opioid epidemic ravaging Colorado families and communities. As the fentanyl crisis continues to spike in our state and around the country, it’s more important than ever to get the word out about life-saving precautions people can take,” said Valuck, a professor at the CU Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences.

Weapons in the Fight Against Fentanyl

The [Keep The Party Safe](#) website educates Coloradans on how to recognize when someone is experiencing an overdose, administer a naloxone rescue, and check drugs to see if fentanyl is present. When used properly, fentanyl test strips are reliable and can be an important step to take. Test strips can be found [online](#), via [syringe access programs](#), and Denver residents can order them directly from [the county for free](#).

Naloxone, an [FDA-approved medication](#), rapidly reverses an opioid overdose, including ones caused by fentanyl. The campaign stresses the safety of naloxone, and encourages its use in all suspected overdose situations, even if they turn out to be false alarms. Naloxone can be purchased from [any pharmacy in Colorado](#) or online, and Coloradans are encouraged to check their insurance coverage. Denver residents can order naloxone directly from [the county for free](#).

Grassroots Efforts to Elevate Awareness

Colorado Naloxone Awareness Month: For the fourth consecutive year, Colorado Gov. Jared Polis proclaimed August Colorado [Naloxone Awareness Month](#). The 2022 [proclamation](#) sponsored by the Consortium helps empower Coloradans to become lifesavers during an opioid overdose. [Research shows](#) naloxone helps prevent or temporarily reverse an opioid overdose with efficacy as high as 75-100 percent. Last year in Colorado, an estimated 1,258 lives could have potentially been saved from an [opioid overdose](#), including those lives lost to fentanyl.

International Overdose Awareness Day: Each year on August 31, International Overdose Awareness Day remembers without stigma those who have died from overdoses, and acknowledges the grief of the family and friends left behind. More information and a schedule of Colorado events can be found at [EndOverdoseCO.com](#), created by volunteers to honor lost loved ones and provide resources to save lives.

Recovery Month: Each September, Recovery Month [celebrates the gains made by those in recovery](#) from substance use and mental health. Recovery Month works to promote and support new evidence-based treatment and recovery practices, the emergence of a strong and proud recovery community, and the dedication of service providers and community members across the nation who make recovery in all its forms possible.

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About the [Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention](#)

The Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention coordinates Colorado’s statewide response to the prescription drug abuse epidemic, focusing on the opioid crisis. The Consortium works with stakeholders such as government agencies, community groups, law

enforcement, and the medical community. The Consortium is part of the University of Colorado Center for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention in the Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, which is at the CU Anschutz Medical Campus. For more information, please visit www.CoRXConsortium.org.

Media Resources

Keep The Party Safe Toolkit: Digital Banners, International Overdose Awareness Post, and Social Media Assets can be accessed here: bit.ly/KeepThePartySafe

Storytelling Opportunities: Naloxone and fentanyl test strip trainings (based on availability), videos, images, and interviews with subject matter experts are available upon request.