

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

September 20, 2023

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Monifa B. McKnight, Superintendent of Schools

Subject: Readiness for Schools

During the Readiness for Schools discussion on August 24, 2023, Board members requested the following information.

Question:

Ms. Rivera-Oven requested information regarding the system's immunization compliance regarding new students, especially at the elementary school level.

Response:

School Immunizations Updates: School Year 2023–2024

- As of September 15, 2023, 93% of all Grade 7 students currently have all their vaccinations.
- As COMAR 10.06.04 requires students to be up to date on required school immunizations by the first day of school or have evidence of a vaccine appointment within 20 calendar days, this number is expected to increase as documentation is submitted by families.
- Monday, September 18, 2023 was the deadline for being up to date based on the first day of school, August 28, 2023, for Montgomery County Public Schools.
- Proactive outreach to families by pupil personnel workers and health room staff will continue throughout the school year.
- Six schools have partnered with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to provide middle school vaccinations
 - September 12 – Argyle, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, and Silver Spring International middle schools, and
 - September 13 – Forest Oak, Montgomery Village, and Odessa Shannon middle schools.
- At this time, a detailed breakdown by student demographic is not available. Immunization compliance is confirmed manually as families provide documentation to schools. Our Synergy team is working with DHHS to stream immunization data from the state registry directly into Synergy, so in the future we may be able to do more robust analysis aggregated by student data variables, with higher fidelity.

Question

Ms. Silvestre requested information regarding the opioid crisis and MCPS: How are we doing regarding this crisis?

Response

- The attached Fentanyl Prevention and Response presentation summarizes Montgomery County Public Schools district level-efforts related to youth opioid use.
- To date, there have been zero suspected opioid overdoses requiring administration of naloxone to students.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Patricia Kapunan, school system medical officer, Office of the Deputy Superintendent, via email.

MBM:PKM:KP:mak

Attachment

Copy to:

Executive Staff

Ms. Webb

Fentanyl Prevention & Response
September 2022 – Present

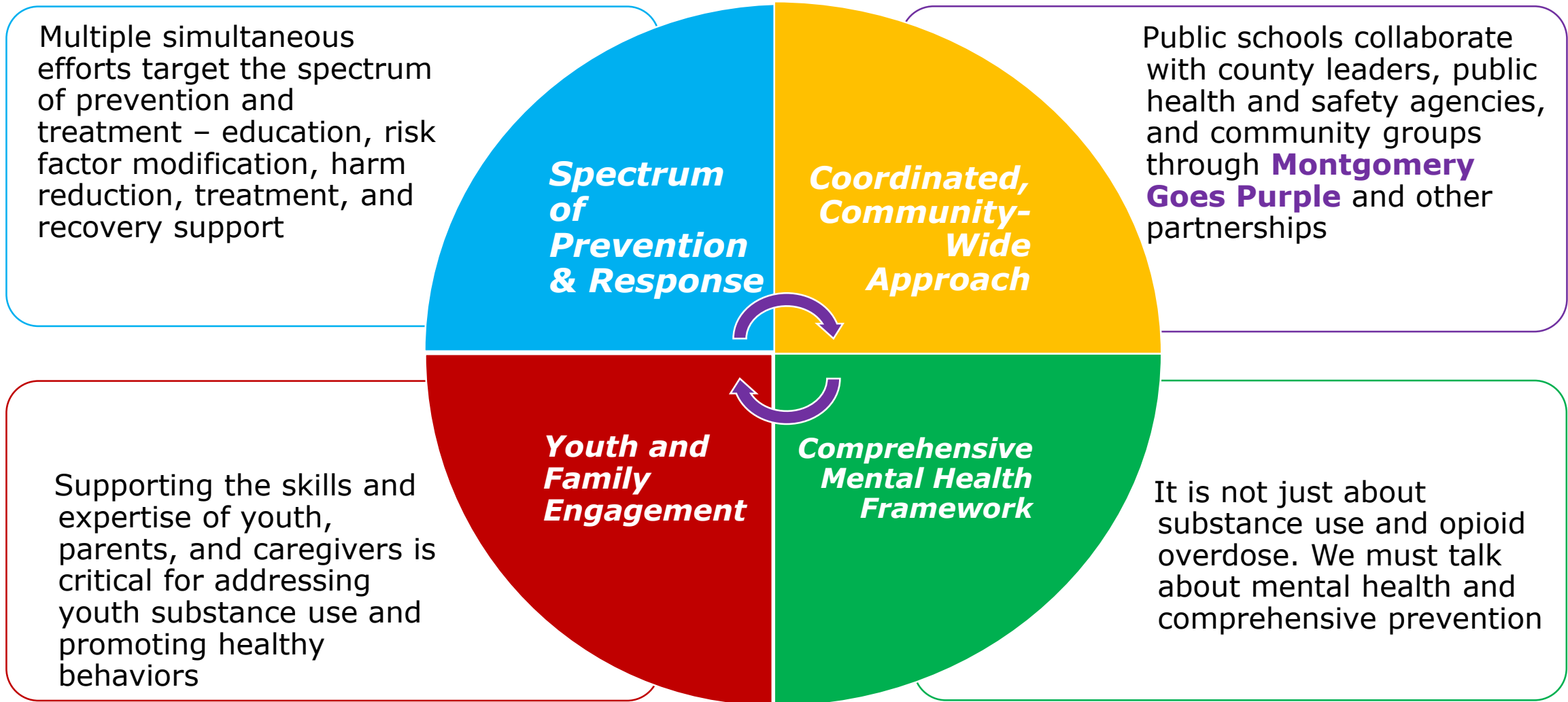
Montgomery County Public Schools
Montgomery County, MD

Summary Points

- MCPS continues to participate in community efforts to raise opioid overdose awareness in Montgomery County and collaborate to support students and families
- We engage in a collaborative and comprehensive efforts to prevent and respond to youth substance use that includes youth, families and community partners; and acknowledges the full spectrum of mental health needs
- We continue to work with county partners to support our school community through capacity building, youth and family empowerment, and coordinated resources

Youth Opioid Overdose Prevention & Response in Montgomery County

Where are we now?



2022–2023 School Year

- For the 2022–2023 school year, community collaboration efforts to promote opioid overdose awareness were launched with Montgomery Goes Purple on September 1, 2022
- On December 8, 2022, a community message alerted the MCPS community to the escalating threat of illicit fentanyl and opioid overdose for youth
- Three districtwide forums were held at Clarksburg, Northwood, and Paint Branch high schools featuring local resources, opportunities for expert engagement, skills building sessions, and naloxone (Narcan) training and distribution
- School-based outreach (e.g., grade level assemblies) and new substance use prevention groups in six high schools
- Other efforts included employee training, health curriculum review, safety and security procedure review, increasing access to Narcan at school and for the community, parent education sessions

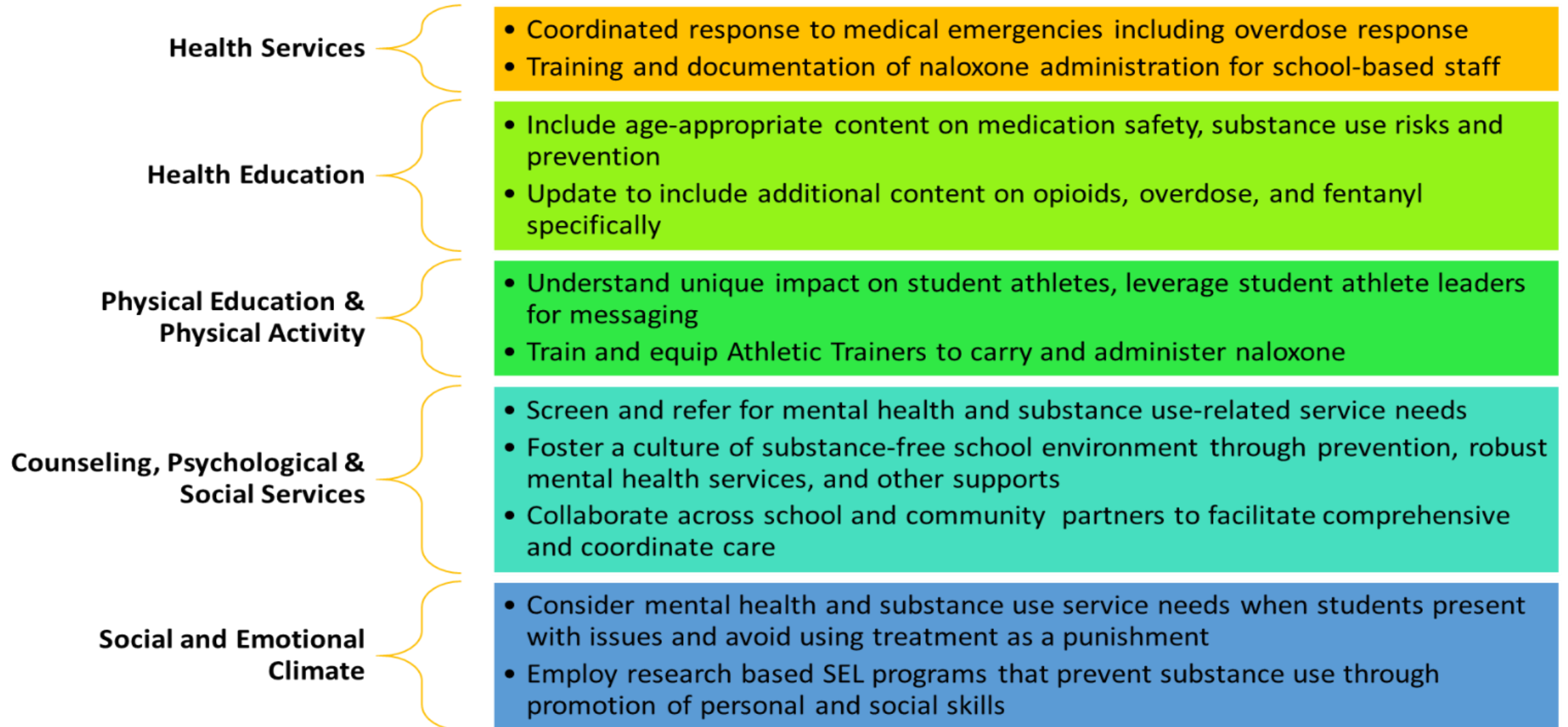
2023–2024 School Year

- Montgomery Goes Purple Collaborations:
 - National Opioid Overdose Awareness Day, August 31
 - Rockville Goes Purple Conference, September 30, LET'S TALK ABOUT RECOVERY: Supporting Mental Health and Substance Use - Prevention, Treatment and Recovery
- Department of Health and Human Services Collaborations:
 - Harm Reduction Services – Adolescent Substance Use Prevention Groups, Narcan training
 - School Health Services – Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) Training
- Montgomery County State's Attorney Office:
 - [Speak up, Save a Life Video Contest](#)
- Other ongoing activities:
 - Districtwide health forums offering sessions
 - Student Leaders collaboration – youth outreach and education
 - Parent education and support

Fentanyl Prevention & Response Reference Slides

*Montgomery County Public Schools
Montgomery County, MD*

Youth Opioid Overdose Prevention and Response in a WSCC Framework



Youth Opioid Overdose Prevention and Response in a WSCC Framework

Physical Environment

- Strategic access to naloxone and other emergency medical supports during and after the school day
- Safety and security procedures support a safe and drug-free school environment

Family Engagement

- Engage parents and caregivers in education about substance use, dangers of opioid use and illicit fentanyl specifically, prevention and response of substance use and opioid overdose
- Provide connections to resources and training including Mental Health First Aid for caregivers

Employee Wellness

- Provide opioid awareness training including risks of use, recognizing and responding to an overdose
- Encourage the use of available resources for mental health support, assist with referrals to services

Community Involvement

- Invite qualified community members and organizations to provide school-based substance-use services, including prevention and mentorship
- Leverage community programs and funds to support student engagement in substance use treatment programs and related services

Youth Substance Use Prevention & Response: DHHS Partnerships

MCPS

Educating youth and families about risks and resources

Connecting schools with community resources, including youth support and programming

Maintaining a safe and drug-free school environment

Emergency procedures in schools/potential overdose response (e.g., Narcan)

DHHS Prevention & Harm Reduction Services

-School-based youth outreach

-Adolescent Substance Use Prevention groups

Sheppard Pratt, The Landing - Recovery and Academic Program (RAP)

School Partnerships

BTheOne.org -Youth-directed substance use and suicide prevention campaign, Youth Ambassadors Program

Child and Adolescent Assessment Services (formerly SASCA)

Prevention & Harm Reduction Services - Narcan training & distribution, fentanyl test strips distribution, harm reduction counseling

DHHS

Suburban Hospital Addiction Treatment Program (Level 1)
Suburban Addiction Treatment

Journeys for Adolescents (Level 2, Intensive Outpatient Treatment)

Outpatient Treatment

Youth & Caregiver Engagement

Parents/Caregivers

- Parent outreach through parent associations and other community groups
- Access to parent training opportunities (e.g., Parent CRAFT)

Students

- School-based community conversations
- Adolescent Substance Use Prevention groups
- Engagement of student leadership and youth media
- Youth-centered health promotion

Everyone

- District wide events: Family Forum on Fentanyl
- Community messages
- Video PSAs - Fentanyl awareness
- Education about crisis resources
- Access to naloxone (Narcan) training and supplies

Employee Information & Training: Collaboration With National Capital Poison Center

Fentanyl and Opioid Overdose: What School Staff Need to Know

What is fentanyl, and why is it so dangerous?



Fentanyl is an opioid medication typically prescribed for pain. Other opioid drugs include morphine, codeine, oxycodone (a component of Percocet), and the illegally produced opioid, heroin. Synthetic fentanyl is produced unlawfully in labs and is commonly found in counterfeit pills or as a contaminant of other illicit substances. Overdoses occur when opioids act on the brain to cause life-threatening respiratory depression. When breathing slows significantly or stops, oxygen is no longer delivered to the brain, heart, and other organs, causing organ failure and death. Fentanyl is 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine. Because it is so strong, small amounts of fentanyl (as little as 2 milligrams) can cause breathing difficulties and death in humans. Illegally produced substances may vary widely and unpredictably in fentanyl content. This is why illicit fentanyl is much more dangerous than legally produced fentanyl prescribed for use under close healthcare supervision.

Is fentanyl only found in pill form? Can other substances like vape cartridge liquid and marijuana products, including edibles, be laced with fentanyl?

Fentanyl produced by the pharmaceutical industry for healthcare use comes in various oral forms, nasal sprays, skin patches, and injectable forms. Illicit fentanyl is most commonly produced in a powder form that can be pressed into pills. It is also made as a liquid that can be dropped onto blotter paper, or put in eye droppers, nasal sprays, or vape cartridge liquid. Because fentanyl is so potent, synthetic fentanyl is a cheap method for augmenting other illegal drugs such as heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine, or other substances. It is important to note that there is no quality control process when producing illegal drugs. An illicit substance is not guaranteed to be free of dangerous additives like synthetic fentanyl. Distributors and users likely do not even know what drugs an illegally-produced substance actually contains, despite what they

Fentanyl and Opioid Overdose: What School Staff Need to Know (continued)

How long does it take for fentanyl to impact someone who took it, and does the amount of time differ based on the way the fentanyl was used?

The formulation of a drug and how it is used (for example, inhalation, intravenous injection, nasal insufflation, or swallowing) can affect the time it takes for the drug to affect the body. In general, intravenous injection and inhalation result in a faster onset of overdose signs and symptoms than oral exposure (e.g., swallowing a pill) because, after oral exposure, it takes time for a drug to be digested and absorbed into the bloodstream. After smoking, snorting, or injecting fentanyl, signs and symptoms of overdose can occur rapidly (within minutes). If breathing appears irregular, slowed, or the person is not breathing, it is crucial to call 911, administer naloxone as quickly as possible if it is available, and begin rescue breathing.

Are there health risks associated with entering a space where individuals may be using fentanyl?

The health risks associated with entering a space where illicit drugs are being used will depend on the characteristics of both the drug and the exposure. Illicit drugs are available in many formulations, including pills, powders, and liquids. There are several different routes of exposure to illicit drugs, including inhalation, consumption, and skin contact.

Inhalation of illicit drugs can lead to toxicity if the drug particles are aerosolized, or suspended in the air. There has been one event in history in which a foreign military possibly used a gas containing an aerosolized fentanyl derivative in a terrorist situation. While weaponized aerosolization of opioids and other drugs can be lethal, it is improbable that such an event would occur at a school. Another situation in which individuals would be at high risk for unintentionally inhaling fentanyl is when visible quantities of powder are present, such as may be found by law enforcement in a drug storage or manufacturing facility.

In a school environment, unintentional inhalation of illicit fentanyl by school staff is highly unlikely to occur. Illicit fentanyl inhalation is far more likely to be a result of deliberate misuse of fentanyl products by individual students, such as when it is snorted or smoked. While direct and intentional inhalation of fentanyl can quickly cause breathing to slow or stop, it's unlikely that people not actively and intentionally using illicit fentanyl will experience similar toxicity.

Oral consumption of drugs can also result in toxicity. However, for a drug to exert effects on the body, it must be absorbed into the body. If a drug is not absorbed into the body, it is highly unlikely to cause toxic effects. Thus, it is implausible for an individual to experience toxic effects just from being near a drug, even in a closed environment like a bathroom.

The skin is the largest organ in the human body and serves as a barrier to dermal drug absorption. While some drugs are formulated specifically to be absorbed through the skin (e.g., fentanyl patches with special technology for skin absorption), skin contact with most drugs is highly unlikely to cause toxic effects.

Key Point

When discovering individuals using illicit substances, if the staff does not directly touch, inhale, or consume the substance(s) being used, they are extremely unlikely to suffer negative health effects. Feelings of anxiety, hyperventilation, or nervousness are not signs or symptoms of opioid exposure and should not be interpreted as toxic effects of secondary exposure to fentanyl. As these types of symptoms may be related to a different type of exposure or medical condition, anyone with symptoms should be evaluated by healthcare staff.



Optimizing Access to Narcan at School and for Youth

- Naloxone has been available in every MCPS school since the 2018–2019 school year per MD Educ Code [§ 7-426.5 \(2017\)](#)
- School nurses and a minimum of three designated staff members must complete hands-on training on how to administer naloxone
- All staff are required to complete the course, *Opioid Awareness and Response*
- This year, stock was increased in secondary schools and additional personnel were identified for hands-on training and carry
- Naloxone training and access to supplies routinely are included in community engagement
- MCPS established independent status as an Overdose Response Program by the Maryland Department of Health
- New MCPS Regulation JPD-RC, *Emergency Care for Individuals Experiencing Symptoms of Opioid Overdose*, addressing youth self-carry of Narcan at school

Family Forums on Fentanyl: January – March 2023



Family Forum on Fentanyl Series & Life Saving Narcan Training

One Pill Can Kill & No One Is Immune

Please join us for the next Montgomery Goes Purple Family Forum on Fentanyl to learn about the dangers of fentanyl and other substances, information regarding school safety, curriculum, and other school & community-based substance use prevention, harm reduction, and treatment initiatives. We welcome all parents/guardians, students, staff, and community members to choose from dozens of educational sessions for both adults and students in English and Spanish. Session topics include:

- 🦋 Mental health and wellness.
- 🦋 Starting substance use conversations.
- 🦋 Healthy boundaries vs. "Tough Love".
- 🦋 Refusal skills & "Escape Hatch" planning.
- 🦋 Emergency response.
- 🦋 What Next? (What to expect in recovery)
- 🦋 Safety at home and at school
- 🦋 And many others!

Resource Fair / Refreshments / SSL Hours available / COVID-19 Vaccinations

RSVP: bit.ly/3JhWxtB



March 25th, 2023
9:00-12:00 p.m.

Paint Branch High School
14121 Old Columbia Pike
Burlonsville, MD 20866



Link to [English](#) and [Spanish](#) flyer
Link to [RSVP](#)

More than 2,700 community members attended three districtwide forums addressing youth opioid use and overdose.

Substance Use Related Community Collaborations

- Montgomery Goes Purple – Coordinated community awareness and events
- Montgomery County Police Department – Cope Trailer, STEER Initiative (Stop, Triage, Engage, Educate, and Rehabilitate)
- Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service – Narcan distribution, Leave Behind Program
- Overdose Fatality Review Team (OFRT)
- Alcohol & Other Drug Abuse Advisory Council (AODAAC)
- Montgomery County Collaboration Council, Montgomery County Prevention Alliance
- Family Peer Support Programs – Montgomery County Federation of Families, Maryland Coalition of Families
- Sheppard Pratt – Dare to be You program, The Landing-Adolescent Clubhouse
- Other community substance use disorder treatment providers