



EPI-GRAM: Special Edition

Sarasota County Health Department
Health and Human Services

Inside this
issue:
Prescription
Drug Misuse



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To report a disease, or disease outbreak, phone, mail or fax* the appropriate office (Please mark confidential)

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 2658

Sarasota, FL 34230-2658

(941) 861-2873 M-F, 8am-5pm

Fax: (941) 861-2902

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To learn more about Sarasota County prescription drug misuse efforts visit

www.scgov.net/drugfreesarasota

Or contact:

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Please share this issue of the Epi-Gram with your staff and colleagues.

Contact Marissa DeVita with any comments or suggestions at

(941) 861-2873,

by e-mail at

Marissa_DeVita@doh.state.fl.us

or by mail to the address listed above.

If you would like the Epi-Gram or other disease control information e-mailed or

faxed to you,

please contact us.

The Epidemic of Prescription Drug Misuse We Need Your Help!

Brooke Baker, MS, EdD, Behavioral Health Planning Coordinator

Scott Pritchard, MPH, County Epidemiologist

Sarasota County and neighboring communities are facing an epidemic. Prescription drug misuse has infiltrated our cities, neighborhoods, and families. It is up to us, as a community, to begin to address this issue and help save lives. The community needs your help!

Bill Little, Health Department Administrator

Here are the facts...

- Prescription drugs represent 86% of all drugs determined to be a cause of death in 2009, according to the District 12 Medical Examiner.
- In Sarasota County, unintentional poisonings due to drug abuse are the **leading cause of death in 15-34 year olds.** (FL DOH Vital Statistics, 2008)
- In Sarasota County, the highest rate of unintentional drug poisoning deaths is among young adults 20-24 years old. The mortality rate among this group is **4 times greater than the state rate.** (Sarasota County Health Department, 2008)
- Sarasota County ranks 6th in the state for unintentional poisoning deaths. The majority of these deaths result from prescription drug misuse. (FLDOH Vital Statistics and Medical Examiner Commission, 2006-2008)

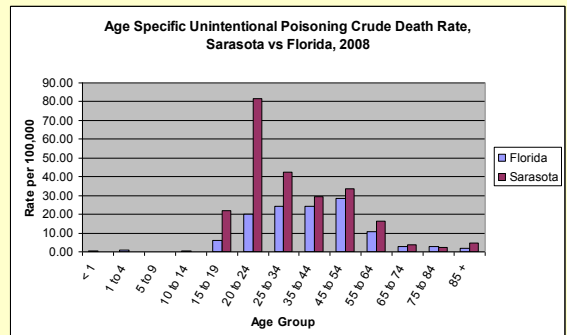


Figure 1. Age specific death rates identify those 20-24 years old as most at risk for unintentional poisoning death in Sarasota County. Additionally, this age group's death rate in Sarasota is four times greater than the state rate.

Drugs Identified in Deceased Persons, District 12 Medical Examiner, 2009			
Drugs Identified*	Total	Cause of Death	Present at Death
Alprazolam	92	55	37
Oxycodone	92	68	24
Cocaine	59	31	28
Methadone	50	40	10
Diazepam	38	18	20
Hydrocodone	35	14	21
Morphine	19	9	10
Propoxyphene	14	3	11
Heroin	4	3	1
Totals	403	241	162
Prescription (%)	84.4%	85.9%	82.1%

* Multiple drugs can be identified and determined to be a cause of death for a single death.

- Sarasota's Addictions Receiving Facility shows a 90% increase in patients admitted for benzodiazepines and opiates from 2006 to 2009. (First Step of Sarasota, 2009)
- For 2009, the Department of Children and Families' substance abuse referral data indicated Oxycodone comprised 67% of the referrals in Sarasota County.
- In the last year, the Department of Children and Families identifies drugs as the primary reason for needing to shelter children in Sarasota County, with 60% of removals due to prescription drug abuse in the family.

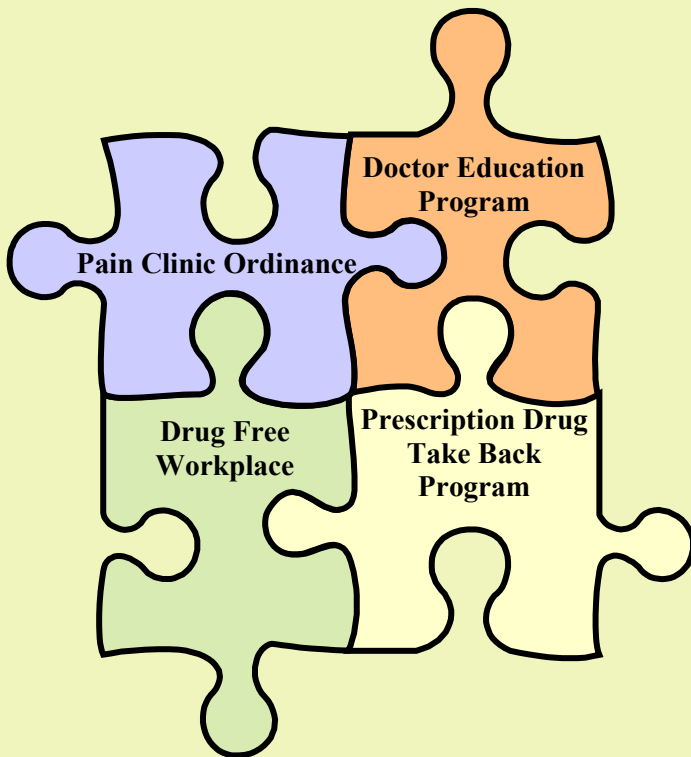


Sarasota Takes On Prescriptions



Here is what we are doing...

Sarasota County has developed a **Community Action Plan** to tackle prescription drug misuse which includes the following 4 components:



Pain Clinic Ordinance: Sarasota County enacted a one year Moratorium on the establishment of new pain clinics.

Doctor Education Program: We are educating medical professionals on prescription drug misuse and encouraging registration for the Prescription Drug Monitoring Database.

Prescription Drug Take Back Program: We have established permanent prescription drug drop off sites and have added more take back days throughout the year.

Drug Free Workplace: We are encouraging community businesses to participate in Drug Free Workplace program to educate work force on dangers of prescription drug misuse.

Here is how you can help...

- ☑ Make prescription interaction and addiction warnings clear to your patients.
- ☑ Sign up for the **Prescription Drug Monitoring Database** when it goes live in December to ensure you are in communication with other medical professionals and pharmacies about patient prescriptions.
- ☑ Share best practices with your colleagues and your patients about appropriate prescription practices.
- ☑ Be on the look out for upcoming continuing education courses on prescription drug misuse.
- ☑ Educate your patients on how to dispose of medicine appropriately. It is unsafe to flush medicine down the toilet or sink! Residents can dispose of uncontrolled medications safely at *Sarasota County Waste Management Centers* and controlled medications at the *Sarasota County Sheriff's Office* permanent pharmaceutical disposal box.

For more information and to stay updated on Sarasota's efforts, go to

www.scgov.net/drugfreesarasota

Remember, encourage patients to dial 211 for additional problems they may be facing or assistance in accessing the Health and Human Services system.

