

Opioid Prevention Education Programs for Middle-Aged and Older Adults: Mobilizing Community and University Resources

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Session Objectives

After attending this session, participants will be able to:

1. Identify the specific ways in which the opioid crisis affects middle-aged and older adults
2. Identify the signs and symptoms of opioid use, misuse, and abuse among middle-aged and older adults
3. Demonstrate the ability to plan, implement, and assess opioid prevention education programs for these populations by mobilizing community and university resources
4. Describe community strategies to reduce opioid misuse and abuse amongst middle-aged and older adults that would improve access to effective and safer alternatives to opioids for pain management

The Opioid Epidemic

“No area of the United States is exempt from this epidemic—we all know a friend, family member, or loved one devastated by opioids”

On a Typical Day in the U.S.

- More than 650,000 opioid prescriptions are dispensed
- 3,900 people initiate nonmedical use of prescription opioids
- 580 people initiate heroin use
- 131 people die from an opioid-related drug overdose

The Opioid Epidemic by the Numbers

2016

- 11.5 Million people misused prescription opioids
- 2.1 million people misused prescription opioids for the first time
- 948,000 people used heroin (170,00 used heroin for the first time)
- 2.1 million people had an opioid use disorder
- 42,249 people died from overdosing on opioids
- \$504 billion in economic costs

Ohio's Opioid Epidemic

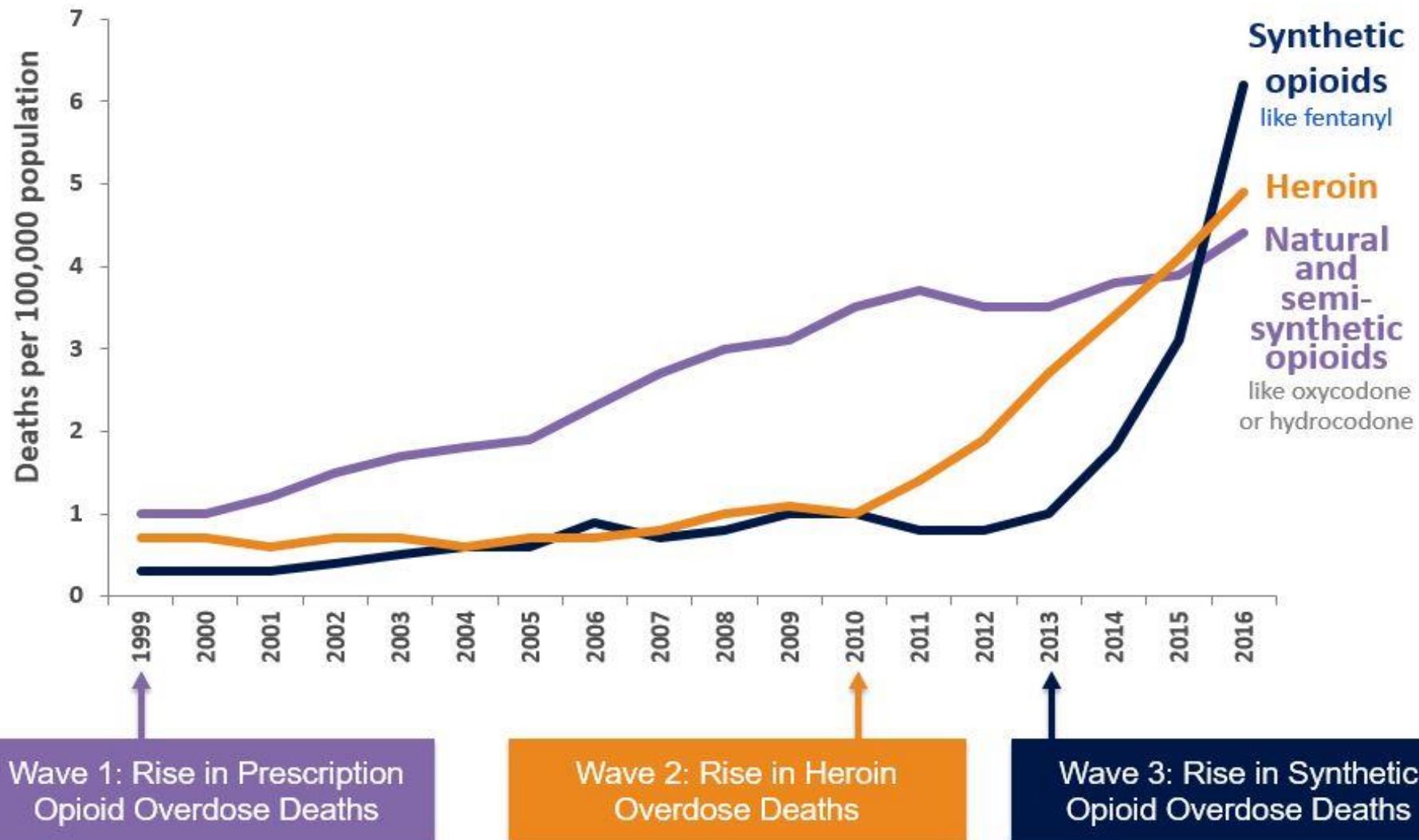
- Every two hours, an Ohioan dies from an unintentional drug overdose
- In 2016, more than 631 million opioid doses were dispensed to Ohio patients
- Four out of five people who started using heroin in the past year had previously used prescription pain relievers non-medically
- 63% of Ohioans who died from unintentional overdose had a prescription for a controlled substance within the past year
- Ohio spent approximately \$45 million for placement costs of children in custody due to parental use of heroin or opiates

How Did We Get Here?

- The rise in opioid overdose deaths can be outlined in three distinct waves



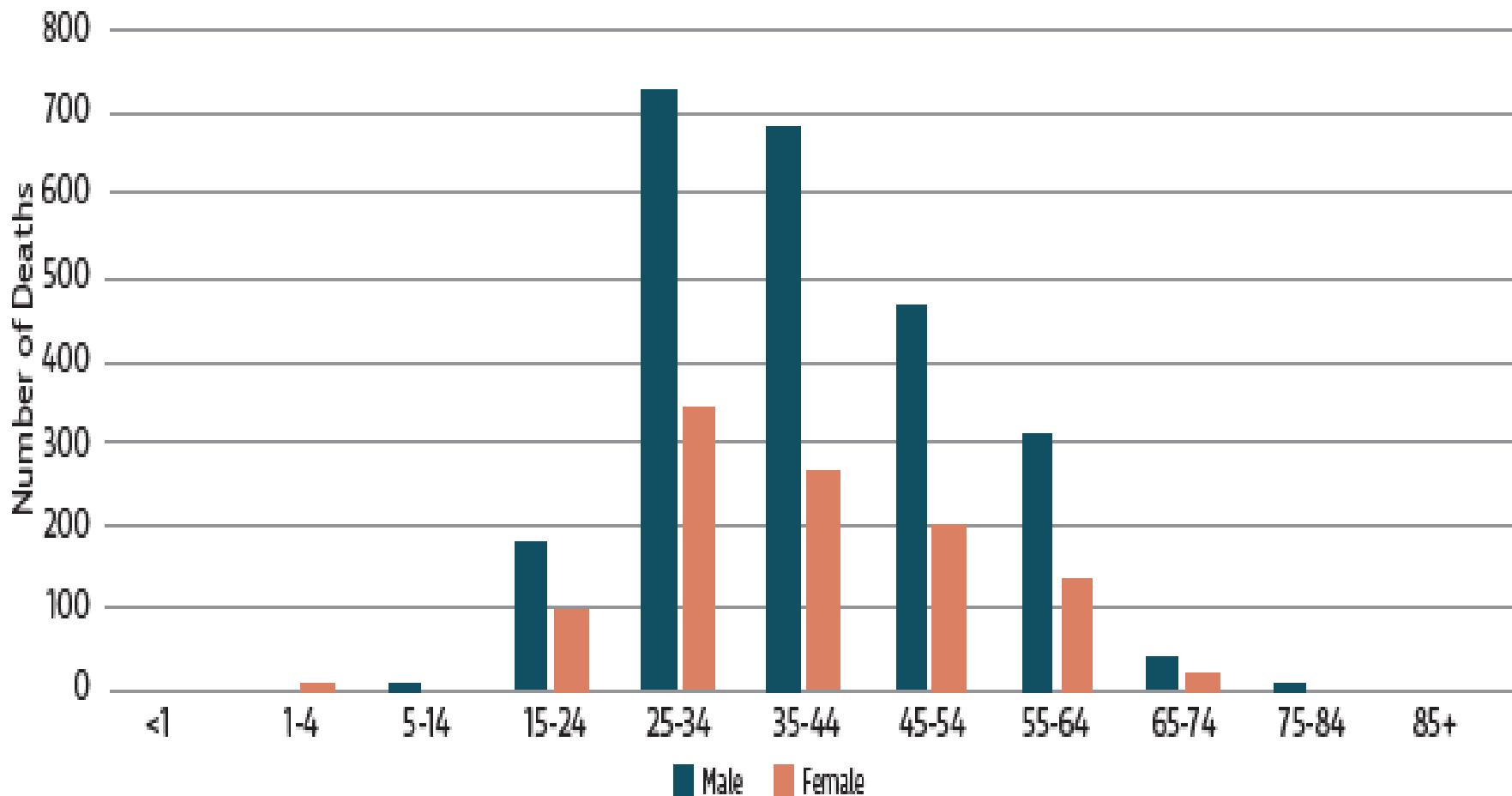
3 Waves of the Rise in Opioid Overdose Deaths



SOURCE: National Vital Statistics System Mortality File.

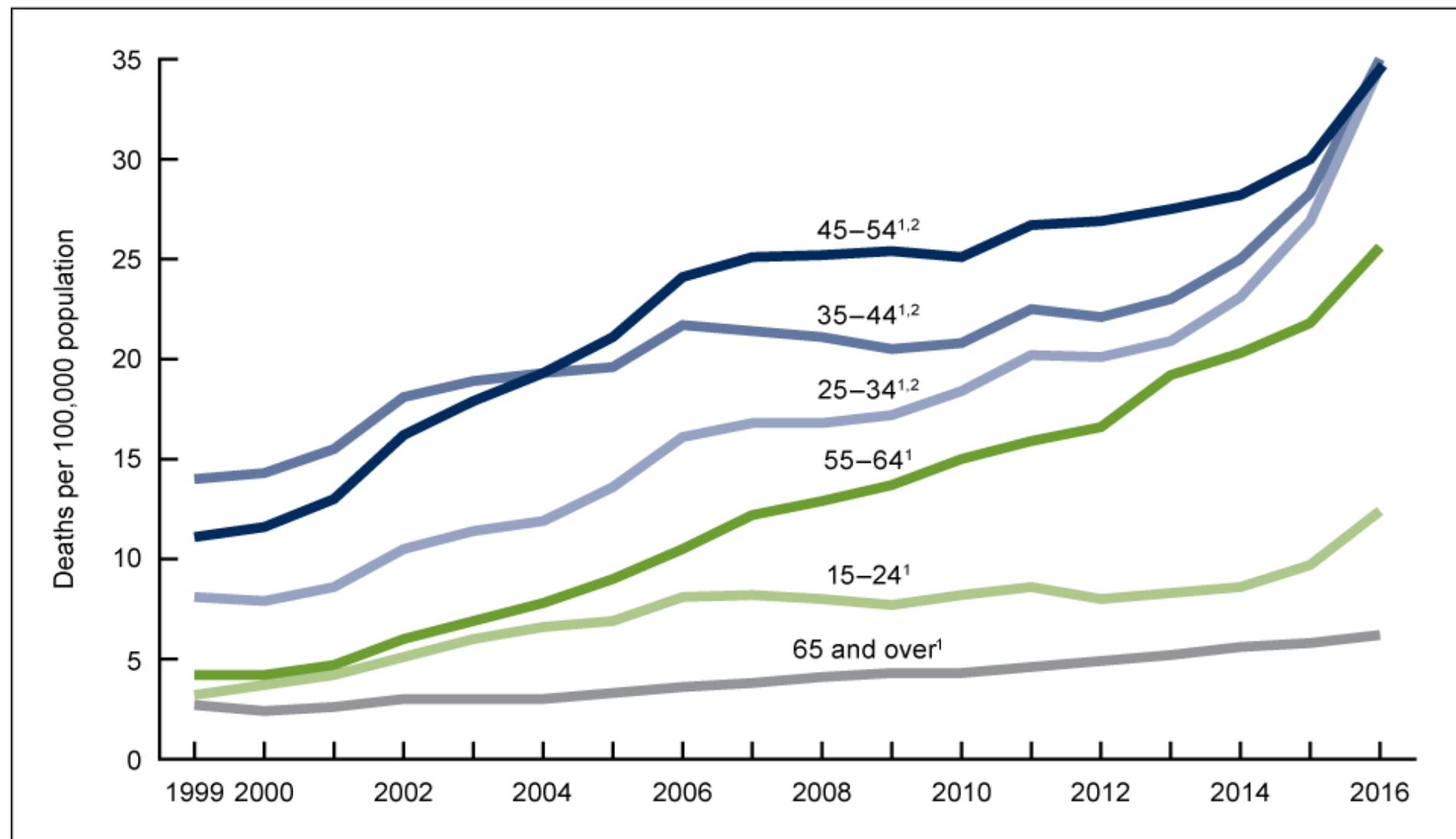
- Drug overdose is now the leading cause of death for Americans under 50 years of age
- What about Americans over age 50? How is this crisis affecting older adults?

Figure 9. Fentanyl and Related Drugs Unintentional Overdose Deaths, by Age and Sex, Ohio, 2017



Source: Ohio Department of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics; analysis conducted by ODH Violence and Injury Prevention Program.
Includes Ohio residents who died due to unintentional drug poisoning (underlying cause of death ICD-10 codes X40-X44).

Figure 2. Drug overdose death rates, by selected age group: United States, 1999–2016



¹Significant increasing trend from 1999 to 2016 with different rates of change over time, $p < 0.005$.

²2016 rate was significantly higher than for the rate for age groups 15–24, 55–64, and 65 and over, $p < 0.05$.

NOTES: Deaths are classified using the *International Classification of Diseases*, Tenth Revision. Drug-poisoning (overdose) deaths are identified using underlying cause-of-death codes X40–X44, X60–X64, X85, and Y10–Y14. Access data table for Figure 2 at: https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db294_table.pdf#2.

SOURCE: NCHS, National Vital Statistics System, Mortality.

- Adults between the ages of **45-54** had the highest death rate from drug overdose (30 deaths per 100,000)
- Overdose death rates increased the greatest in adults aged **55-64** (4.2 deaths per 100,000 in 1999 to 21.8 per 100,000 in 2015)

- 42% of all overdose deaths in the U.S. are people aged 45 and older (CDC, 2017)

Opioid Overdose Deaths In Northwest Ohio Among those 45 Years of Age and Older (2007-2017)

Source: Ohio Public Health Data Warehouse (2018)

County	Overdose Deaths	% aged 45 and older
Defiance	39	31%
Erie	141	54%
Fulton	38	39%
Henry	16	31%
Lucas	736	49%
Ottawa	43	53%
Paulding	11	27%
Sandusky	83	46%
Williams	23	30%
Wood	104	38%
Total	1234	46%

Why Are Opioid Overdose Deaths Increasing Among Older Adults?

- General population is getting older
- Older adults are more likely to be prescribed opiates (one in three Medicare Part D beneficiaries received an opioid prescription)

- 500,000 Medicare Part D beneficiaries received high amounts of opioids (average dose far exceeding the manufacturer's recommended amount)
- 90,000 Medicare beneficiaries were at serious risk of addiction

Source: U.S. Department of Health (2018); AARP (2017)

Older Adults are Uniquely Vulnerable

- Lack of scientific data on the effectiveness and safety of opioids specifically for older adults
- Physiological changes increase drug sensitivity
- Under identified and misdiagnosed
- Older adults take multiple medications
- 42% of medications taken by older adults are obtained from family or friends
- Less likely to have received prevention education or told of risks

- Less than 50% of older adults discussed the risk of addiction with their health care provider
- 43% were told of the dangers of overdosing
- 37% were told what to do with unused pills after the pain eased
- Less than 40% talked to their health care provider about side-effects or the misuse of opioids

Source: National Poll on Healthy Aging (AARP, 2018)

Misuse of Prescription Opioids

- Prescription opioid misuse has increased 66% for those between 50-64, and more than doubled for those 65+
- Older adults are more susceptible to misuse or abuse opioids
- 2.7 million Americans over age 50 were taking opioids for reasons contrary to or in amounts beyond what was prescribed

Consequences of Non-Medical Use of Opioids

- Sedation, cognitive dysfunction, confusion
- Constipation
- Breathing and heart problems
- Opioid induced hyperalgesia
- Hip fractures
- Falls
- Traffic accidents
- Overdose death

Additional Ways in Which Older Adults are Affected by the Opioid Crisis

- Current policies - unintended negative consequence of making it difficult for some older adults to obtain needed opiates for chronic pain

- Opioid abuse/fatal opioid overdoses of adult children is the primary reason that grandchildren assume primary caregiving of the grandchildren

- Older adults may be more vulnerable to crimes committed by individuals addicted to drugs
- Economic impact of the opioid crisis affects all of us

Communities Must Address the Impact of the Opioid Crisis on Middle-Aged and Older Adults

- Few efforts are currently in place that specifically address the impact of the opioid crisis on adults over age 50
- Evident in preliminary research that investigated the availability of web-based opioid prevention materials on the websites of Ohio's aging service providers

Comprehensive Opioid Prevention Education Strategy

A Community Collaboration

First Step – Recognition of the Problem

- Optimal Aging Institute and the Wood County Committee on Aging's analysis of data

Second Step - Providing Information to Existing Agencies/Organizations

- Area Office on Aging of Northwestern Ohio
- Wood County Opiate Task Force
- Wood County Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Services
- University of Toledo's Opioid Task Force
- Wood County Health Department
- Lucas County Health Department
- Drug Abuse Response Team (DART)
- Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Groups

Third Step - Planning/Implementing Workshops (with additional partners)

- April 30th, 2018 – Legislative Breakfast
- July 18th, 2018 - Workshop
- September 25th, 2018 – BGSU Opioid Teach-In
- October 5th, 2018 – Town Hall Meeting with special guest - Lance Robertson (ACL)
- December 3rd, 2018 – Town Hall Meeting

Educational Objectives of Workshops

Participants will become aware of:

1. How the opioid crisis affects all
2. The dangers of opioid misuse and abuse
3. The importance of disposing unused prescription medication and not using medications that were prescribed to others
4. The stigma related to drug misuse and/or drug addiction
5. The importance of discussing with one's health care practitioner alternatives to opioids
6. The importance of becoming an advocate

Advocates for Change

- Better prevention, treatment, and recovery services for older adults
- Better pain management, including coverage for alternative ways to manage pain
- Better diagnosis of opioid misuse/abuse
- Better targeting of overdose reversing drugs
- Better data and research
- Attention to incidence of *all* substance use disorders among older adults

Fourth Step - Measuring Impact of Strategies

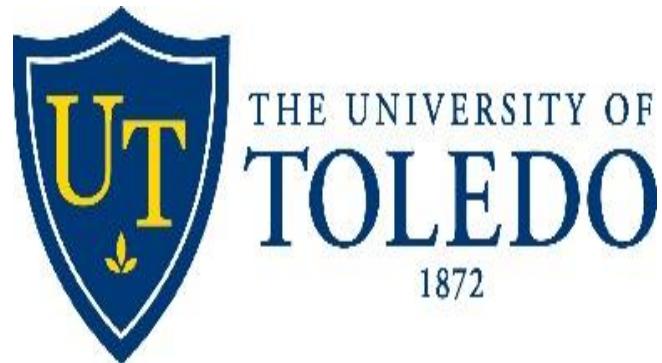
- Pre- and Post- Knowledge questionnaires
- Participants' feedback
- Feedback from community agencies and organizations
- Media coverage of events

Fifth Step – New Initiatives Based on Results

- Additional workshops through collaboration with other agencies/organizations
- Website devoted to opioid crisis and older adults
 - www.bgsu.edu/oai
- Publications of results
- Technical assistance for Senior Centers



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Questions?