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Substance and Alcohol Abuse / Tobacco Use

Key findings from the JHACH CHNA:

The sharp uptick of countywide opioid-related drug abuse and its resulting hospitalizations and deaths was prioritized over other types of substance abuse, particularly in consideration of a national public health emergency declared in October 2017.

- The Florida Department of Health-Pinellas County 2012 Community Health Assessment identified ‘addiction’ as a top health problem of concern and ‘alcohol and drug abuse’ as the leading behavior of concern across the county.
- According to the 2016 Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey, 60.4% of Pinellas high school students and 25.8% of middle school students have used alcohol or other illicit drugs.
- The number of children and teens hospitalized for prescription opioid poisonings has more than doubled in recent years, with both accidental overdoses and suicide attempts on the rise, a U.S. study suggests.

Outcome-Driven Activities:

Develop awareness campaign on drug addiction, starting with opioids

For opioid abuse, this involves awareness and prevention messaging about addiction in schools, after-school programming and specialized groups targeting youth. Additional campaigns will be developed for alcohol and other illicit drugs.

Assist Pinellas County Opioid Task Force with education and awareness efforts

Formed in June 2017, the Pinellas County Opioid Task Force is a collaboration of community partners in response to the dramatic increase in opioid-related drug abuse and deaths in the county. Efforts need to be focused on reaching youth and training practitioners who work with children on opioid abuse. Additionally, standard protocols for opioid-addicted children in the foster care system must be updated.



PROPOSED OBJECTIVES

1. Develop awareness campaign on drug addiction (beginning with opioids) and debut at the start of the 2019-20 school year.
2. Support a level one evidence-based awareness and assistance annual training program to be performed annually to assist school personnel in identifying and understanding the signs of emotional disturbance, mental illness and substance use disorders, before each school year.
3. Improve patient health care, safety and a reduction in controlled substance abuse and controlled substance diversion by expanding access to treatment and reducing unmet treatment needs over the next three years.
4. Enhance the substance abuse continuum of care with community-based services to address the opioid crisis through outreach, addiction treatment and recovery support services over the next three years.
5. Produce a Parent Resource Manual (to be updated annually) outlining protocols and countywide resources to better educate and assist parents in dealing with mental health and substance abuse issues they are confronting.

Tobacco-related efforts have been merged with the efforts of the Asthma/Allergies Community Connector Group.