

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

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Featured Campaign: Fentanyl is Forever



Fentanyl is Forever - The Family

Reflecting the United States struggles with tragic drug overdoses exceeding 100,000 deaths in 12 months, Ventura County's local accidental fatal overdoses have also risen dramatically. In both cases, the increases are driven and sustained by illegal fentanyl, a powerful synthetic opioid that has flooded the illicit drug supply.

In response to the covert dangers of fentanyl, Ventura County Behavioral Health (VCBH) just released a new community campaign, Fentanyl is Forever (English) and El Fentanilo es para Siempre (Spanish). The prevention messages unfold through five diverse short stories that allow people to experience and understand the risks of fentanyl to their friends, families, and communities. In addition to warning the public about the dangers of fentanyl, viewers are then linked to local resources for more information and help.

The goals of the campaign are to increase awareness of fentanyl risks and its impact on communities, and to decrease the stigma related to talking about substance misuse and addiction. It complements messaging related to naloxone preparedness and substance use disorder treatment.

Learn more:

Fentanyl is Forever

www.fentanylventuracounty.org

Ventura County Responds

www.venturacountyresponds.org/preventing-overdose

Words from Alma

Looking Forward to a New Year

By Alma Ixta, Community Services Coordinator

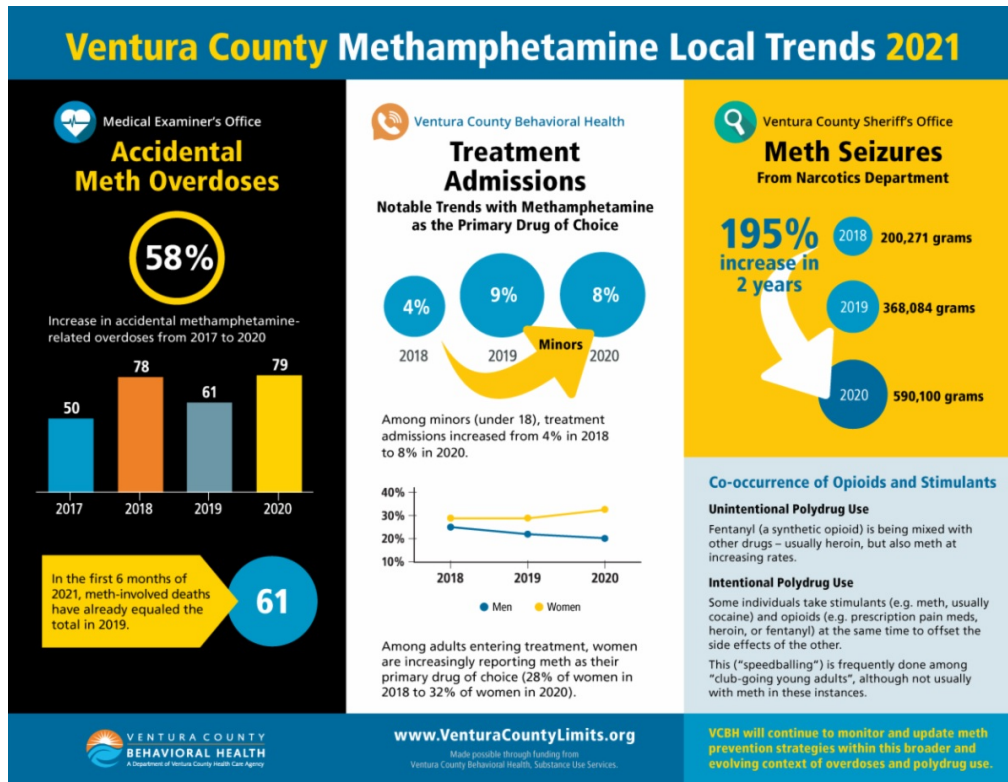
December is here and 2021 will soon be over! I can't help but look back at what this past year has taught me and all the experiences lived and left behind. The pandemic stayed in our lives as a reminder of how vulnerable we all are. COVID didn't discriminate and impacted us all. Through the many losses, I have learned to survive loss and am grateful. I continue to face challenges but strive to find joy and happiness.



There's much to be improved in our daily work, including addressing health disparities in our communities. At the end of 2021 we are eager to continue working to help make our communities healthier. We continue with prevention efforts to build on the strengths of our community and work to provide a more equitable system through collaborations and partnerships throughout the county.

I look forward to our continued partnership with our partner agencies and all the great work and commitment that many of us have to work together towards change. So I hope everyone has an amazing holiday season and look forward to a great 2022 together in partnership!

New Publication: Ventura County Methamphetamine Local Trends 2021



VCBH published its new Ventura County Methamphetamine Local Trends 2021. We will continue to monitor and update meth prevention strategies within this broader and evolving context of overdoses and polydrug use.

Read the Report:

[Ventura County Methamphetamine Local Trends 2021](#)

Meth - Don't Buy the Lie

www.talkingaboutmeth.org

Spotlight: Shout Out to our Prevention Contractors

Friday Night Live



Providing Support to Teens

Friday Night Live and Club Live (FNL) continues to serve diverse youth grades 5 to 12 across Ventura County. FNL values youth as partners and actively engages them in decision-making, planning, and implementation of activities that enhance communities. This includes conversations and education surrounding the risks of substance use, the negative effects it has on the developing teen brain, and the negative impact it has in communities.

FNL provides youth with important developmental supports and opportunities that young people need to thrive. This includes safe and supportive environments, caring relationships, connections with their community and school, leadership and advocacy opportunities, and valuable skills development.

FNL youth participants have been actively working to continue to provide peer-to-peer education around important issues. This past October, FNL chapters from across the county coordinated Red Ribbon week activities to continue their efforts around substance use prevention and awareness.

"Being in Friday Night Live is important to me because I never felt so involved and connected with a program. I was able to build upon my skills in which I never expected to have, such as public speaking and leading a group. This program helped me grow as a leader and person to better our community."

Saving Lives Camarillo

MEGA BRAIN PRESENTATION AT ACHS



Katherine Gross discussed substances affect on the brain at local schools. Above is an image from her ACHS presentation.



Helping to Prevent Substance Use in our Community

Saving Lives Camarillo has been busy with opportunities to work on prevention of substance use among adolescents within the community. Partnering with the DEA, we began a sticker campaign at The Medicine Shoppe in Camarillo to promote safe medicine disposal. We provided customers with information on disposal bin locations.

We distributed 2,048 prescription drug door hangers to help share awareness of safe medicine disposal and opioid information. We went to local schools with a Mega Brain inflatable to present to students about the effects of substance use on the brain and how to cope by learning healthy coping skills.

Saving Lives Camarillo promoted prescription drug lock boxes at home to prevent others from getting into prescription medicines. We continue to work on ways to spread awareness to help prevent substance use and promote well-being within the community.

Learn more:

[Saving Lives Camarillo](#)

Proclamation on National Impaired Driving Prevention Month

"Every year, thousands of lives are needlessly lost on our Nation's roadways because of alcohol — and drug-impaired driving. These are avoidable tragedies that leave deep holes in our Nation's families and communities. During National Impaired Driving Prevention Month, we reaffirm our commitment to preventing impaired driving. We remember the victims and honor their memory by making the responsible decision to drive sober and ensure that others do the same.

Driving while impaired by any substance — legal or illegal — is dangerous. Alcohol, illicit drugs, and even over-the-counter and prescription medications can impair a driver's judgment, decrease motor coordination, and slow the reaction time necessary to safely operate a motor vehicle. Alcohol-impaired driving has led to over 10,000 deaths each year.

During National Impaired Driving Prevention Month, we recommit ourselves to doing all we can to stop these preventable crashes and remember those who lost their lives as a result of impaired driving. We must also share our appreciation for the law enforcement officers who risk their lives each day to keep our communities safe while keeping impaired drivers off of our roadways."

— President Biden

Read the Proclamation:

[A Proclamation on National Impaired Driving Prevention Month, 2021](#), The White House, November 30, 2021

Not a DUI

www.notadui.org

In the Know

- Statement by President Joe Biden on Surpassing 100,000 American Overdose Deaths in the Past Year, November 17, 2021. [Read the Proclamation](#)
- [Alcohol and Marijuana Use and Motivations Among Young Adults During the Pandemic](#), NIAAA Spectrum, 2021
- [Advisory: Prescription Stimulant Misuse Among Youth and Young Adults](#), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), November 2021

Local Resources During the Holiday Season

- [Resources to Support the Community During COVID-19](#)
 - [Ventura County Human Services Agency](#)
 - [211 Ventura County Resources](#)
 - [Safe Choices](#)
 - [Ventura County Behavioral Health](#)
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About Us

Supporting Health – Preventing Harm

Ventura County Behavioral Health, Substance Use Services - Prevention, works upstream to reduce alcohol and drug-related problems in our community. Initiatives are aimed at limiting harms related to impaired driving; underage and binge drinking; marijuana and vaping, especially as it relates to harms to youth; prescription drug abuse; and addressing health disparities among vulnerable populations.

A primary goal is to delay the onset of first use of alcohol and or other drugs by youth. We collaborate with schools, parent groups, government agencies, medical partners, law enforcement and community-based organizations.

Contact Us

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Photo: Alma Ixta and Erika Fernandez



STAY CONNECTED

