



STATE OF MICHIGAN

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

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MDHHS seeking feedback during series of local town halls on opioids

LANSING, Mich. – The Michigan Opioids Task Force and Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) are hosting a series of town halls throughout 2020. During the events, state officials will seek to learn more about how the opioid epidemic has impacted diverse communities across Michigan and discuss the state's efforts to address the crisis.

In 2018, Michigan recorded more than 2,000 opioid-related overdose deaths and more than 8,000 Michiganders have lost their lives to this epidemic in the last five years. Earlier this year, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer announced the launch of a multi-year campaign to cut opioid-related overdose deaths by half in five years. The state's strategy addresses three key areas: preventing opioid misuse, ensuring individuals using opioids can access high-quality recovery treatment and reducing the harm caused by opioids to individuals and their communities.

At the town halls, MDHHS and the Michigan Opioids Task Force will share the 2020 strategy to turn the tide on the crisis, seek feedback from the public and host a Q-and-A about the crisis response. The first event is at Wayne County Community College Larry K. Lewis Education Center Auditorium, 8200 Outer Drive West in Detroit, from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m., Friday, Jan. 17. The event is being co-hosted by the Detroit Wayne Integrated Health Network.

“The state cannot tackle this epidemic alone,” said Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, chief medical executive and chief deputy for health for MDHHS. “Community and stakeholder engagement at every step is critical to us being able to turn the tide on this public health crisis. We look forward to having honest and candid conversations with people across the state so we hear concerns and develop solutions that resonate with Michiganders.”

Information gathered during the town halls will help the state develop a crisis response that is flexible; effective to fit the needs of communities from Detroit to Grand Rapids to Marquette; and informed by the experiences of Michiganders affected by the crisis.

A few key questions will guide the conversation:

- How has the opioid epidemic affected you, your family or your community?
- What services, programs or policies would you recommend to help address the crisis?
- How can the state help combat stigma and change the narrative around opioid use disorder?

- MORE -

Additional town halls are being hosted in the following areas of the state:

- Sterling Heights on March 10.
- Gaylord on July 24.
- Escanaba on July 29.
- Flint on September 25.
- Grand Rapids in November.

For more information about the state's opioids response and available resources, visit
Michigan.gov/opioids.

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