



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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MDHHS launches campaign to promote harm reduction services

Ad campaign features real-life stories from people across Michigan sharing their personal experiences with substance use and benefits of harm reduction services

LANSING, Mich. –The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) has partnered with Vital Strategies to launch [a media campaign](#) to promote the critical importance of harm reduction services in Michigan’s response to the opioid epidemic.

As part of Michigan’s comprehensive [opioid strategy](#), the harm reduction component includes expanding the availability of naloxone and access to syringe service programs (SSPs). Naloxone can save lives by reversing the effects of opioid-related drug poisonings or overdoses. SSPs are agencies that offer clients compassionate, judgement-free and person-centered care to reduce the harms associated with substance use.

The campaign kicks off on the heels of Gov. Gretchen Whitmer declaring Feb. 24-28 as [Opioid Addiction Awareness Week](#).

“Those who use substances are many times the first in a situation to respond to someone experiencing a drug overdose. It is critical we empower those who can most quickly help with the tools necessary to save lives,” said Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, chief medical executive and chief deputy director for health at MDHHS.

In 2020, 52,032 naloxone kits were distributed from the online portal and 32,000 kits were dispersed by SSPs. During this same time, SSPs distributed over 1.7 million syringes at nearly 29,000 direct or indirect client visits. When clients are ready, SSPs also help navigation to recovery services. SSPs helped refer over 2,000 clients to substance use treatment in 2020.

“There is a tragic and preventable overdose crisis in our country, and we know that harm reduction services are among the most effective strategies we can implement to reduce deaths,” said Daliah Heller, Director of Drug Use Initiatives at Vital Strategies. “We applaud MDHHS for this moving ad campaign, featuring Michiganders doing harm reduction work in their communities, and offering critical information, hope, and dignity for people who use drugs.”

Vital Strategies work on this campaign is part of the Bloomberg Philanthropies \$10 million investment in overdose prevention in Michigan that was announced in March 2019. This \$900,000 campaign includes billboards, gas station posters, search, video, social media and digital media. The ads encourage Michiganders to “change at their own pace” and include real-life stories from people across Michigan sharing their personal experiences with substance use and harm reduction services.

For more information and resources, visit Michigan.gov/Opioids.

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