

Improving Lives through Health Education on Opioid Prevention & Treatment

Call for advocacy and health promotion activities directed toward increased education and awareness for opioid addiction and treatment.

Adopted by the Minnesota Chapter's Board of Directors December 19, 2019

Where as, the Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE) national board of directors adopted a resolution on June 13, 2018 for Improving Lives through Health Education on Opioid Prevention and Treatment (<https://www.sophe.org/resources/resolution-improving-lives-health-education-opioid-prevention-treatment/>)

Where as, resolutions adopted by the national SOPHE board are accepted by the Minnesota Society for Public Health Education (MN SOPHE) board of directors as guidance and direction for chapter member action on a health education issue at a national level, the supporting references of those resolutions adopted by national SOPHE also serve as supporting references for MN SOPHE adopted resolutions on the same issue at a state level.

Where as, opioids are the primary source of drug overdose deaths in Minnesota. (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/opioids/documents/2018prelimoverdosedeadreport.pdf>)

Where as, opioids can serve a vital purpose in the treatment of pain, Minnesota has developed opioid prescribing guidelines for clinicians who manage pain in primary care and specialty outpatient settings. (<https://mn.gov/dhs/opip/opioid-guidelines/>)

Therefore, be it resolved that the Society for Public Health Education Minnesota Chapter shall:

I. Educate and encourage MN SOPHE members to engage in public health education that informs fellow members, other health professionals, employers, and the public about evidence-based/informed practice, education, and policy regarding opioid use disorder prevention and treatment.

II. Continue to promote SOPHE's Qualifications of Health Education Specialists resolution to further advocate the employment of health education specialists in settings where they can create, administer, and evaluate opioid misuse prevention programs. SOPHE recommends that health education specialists:

a. Be involved in planning, implementing, and evaluating opioid prevention and treatment programs.

b. Advocate for and support multi-sector efforts aimed at preventing opioid misuse (i.e., pharmacists, physicians, dentists, insurers, emergency responders, employers, faith-based organizations, and youth development professionals), and be supportive in directing efforts toward community conditions (i.e., employment, education, housing) and the systems (i.e., business, law enforcement, government, healthcare) that have potentially contributed to the opioid epidemic - and that are critical to helping communities heal and build resilience.

III. Increase professional education and public awareness on the existing state policies and programs that help prevent high-risk prescribing to prevent opioid overdoses. Media and other outreach efforts will focus on the underlying factors that contribute to and reinforce opioid use, including structural drivers such as loss of industry and jobs, high unemployment, frayed social connections, and a pervasive sense of hopelessness. This will support health educators in developing strategies and approaches that consider underlying factors and root causes - including community trauma - that drive opioid use.