



PREVENTION *Connection* SPRING 2022

A quarterly newsletter by The Alliance for Healthy Communities

Bike, Walk, Run

...Join the Fun!



Saturday, May 7, 2022 • 9:00am to Noon
Starkey Park - Pavilion B



**See
Page 5 for
Details**

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If you have a story you would like to share in this quarterly Newsletter, please contact Kellie Rodriguez: asap@empoweredcommunities.org

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WWW.EMPOWEREDCOMMUNITIES.ORG



Alliance
for **Healthy
Communities**

Hello prevention champions!

Welcome to the Spring addition of our quarterly Prevention Connection Newsletter. We have many upcoming initiatives and events in this addition, and we look forward to working with all of you to prevent addiction in Pasco County! As always, we would be nothing without every one of you assisting in this very important work.

In May, our Second Annual Pedal for Prevention Event is taking place in Starkey Park! We had so much fun with this event last year; we had to bring it back! Not only are we excited to continue with fundraising initiatives to assist with the important work we all do, but this year we have also collaborated with Swamp Mountain Biking to offer guided tours through the park and Dang Good Sushi to bring food to the event! We hope to see you there! In addition, our Recovery Walk in September will also be back this year, and is already full speed ahead in the planning process. Make sure to continue to check our social media channels and website for updates. Lastly, read on for all of our continual events like our Converse with a Nurse: Knowledge is Power series, Journey to Healing Hearts, and our Opioid/RX Committees' quarterly Town Hall events. These are just a portion of the events we hold every year to keep the prevention message in the forefront of our community's minds. Everyone is invited to assist in planning and volunteering with any of our events.

We continue to be innovative in our approach with our STAND Youth Coalition, and we are happy to announce that we now have a once monthly in person STAND meeting at New Port Richey Recreation Center, as well as hosting STAND Youth Summits this quarter and next. These are in addition to our once monthly STAND General Coalition Meeting, and we hope to continue growing locations of our STAND groups throughout the year. If you know of locations in which would best serve our youth for a STAND meeting, or know a youth that would like to be a part of STAND, please, reach out!

It would be impossible to encompass all the work we do in one short letter. Peruse this edition of Prevention Connection to see what we have accomplished this quarter, and what is in the works for next. As always, our website has comprehensive lists of our upcoming events, committees and local resources and our social media channels are updated several times a week with our community partner's initiatives and events. Thank YOU for being a part of the solution!

With Gratitude,
Kellie Rodriguez, ASAP Coordinator
Chrissie Parris, AHC Board President

Losing a loved one to addiction is hard. You are not alone.

Journey to Healing Hearts



Virtual Support Group

First Thursday of the month | 6:00pm

Zoom Link:

Meeting ID: 820 5783 1059

Passcode: 442098

For inquiries:

ASAP@empoweredcommunitites.org



Alliance for
Substance
Addiction
Prevention





@PascoASAP



@ASAP_Pasco



@ASAP_Pasco



**Alliance for
Substance
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Prevention**

Pasco ASAP uses local data to direct our prevention programs

ASAP 2022 PRIORITY ISSUES

- Youth Drug Use
- Underage Drinking
- Opioid Use, Misuse and Addiction
- Rates of Substance Exposed Newborns
- Impaired Driving
- Intravenous Drug Use
- Tobacco Use

ASAP MISSION

To coordinate community efforts to reduce county-wide risk factors for addiction, thereby preventing and decreasing substance use in a comprehensive and long-term manner that primarily impacts the youth in the community.

ASAP CONTACT INFORMATION

Coordinator: Kellie Rodriguez
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ASAP MEETINGS ARE ON zoom

GENERAL COALITION

Fourth Tuesday of every month • 10:00am • Meeting ID: 894 8050 6106 Password: 399526

RECOVERY Hybrid on ZOOM/In-Person

Fourth Monday of every month • 5:00pm • Meeting ID: 826 7025 4538 Password: 451180

SUBSTANCE EXPOSED NEWBORN

Second Wednesday of every month • 10:00am • Meeting ID: 828 6547 9166 Password: 061677

ALCOHOL INITIATIVES

First Monday of every month • 4:30pm • Meeting ID: 844 2750 9059 Password: 207615

OPIOID / RX

First Tuesday of every month • 3:00pm • Meeting ID: 834 6615 6874 Password: 344143

CULTURAL COMPETENCE

Third Monday of every month • 4:30pm • Meeting ID: 815 1525 0641 Password: 883088



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ASAP Committee Updates

ALCOHOL INITIATIVES COMMITTEE & TOBACCO FREE PARTNERSHIP

The Alcohol Initiative Committee has some very exciting updates! We have been so busy continuing our initiatives. March 21-27 is National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week. The week is a way to continue to educate individuals on alcohol and other drugs. April is Alcohol Awareness Month. We are pleased to be included on the New Port Richey City Council agenda on April 5 as they present us with a proclamation highlighting MADD's Power Talk 21 and the committee's efforts to reduce DUI arrests and underage access to alcohol. We participated in our first Prom Promise event for the year at Mitchell Ranch High School in New Port Richey. This very powerful presentation serves to remind students of the dangers of drinking and driving. The event reached in excess of 1,000 students. We are also continuing to collect data with our environmental scans and one on ones. I have written a separate article on the one-on-ones. Our committee meets the first Monday of the month on Zoom. Please email Bonni.Snider@Baycare.org for more information.

CULTURAL COMPETENCE COMMITTEE

The cultural competence committee has continued to discuss how to get involved with other community partners and expand into the community. We are continuing to work on the community survey to better assess our communities needs. If you would like to get involved, please look at our website, www.empoweredcommunities.org. The committee meets the 3rd Monday of every month on Zoom at 3:30 pm.

PRESENTERS WANTED!

Does your agency have something to share with the ASAP Coalition? We are looking for presenters for our monthly meetings on Zoom.

Please contact ASAP Coordinator Kellie Rodriguez at asap@empoweredcommunities.org

Thank you!

RECOVERY COMMITTEE

We met in February at Starbucks, and met at the NEAT Coffee Shop and Meeting Center for March, 5500 Main Street, Unit 108, New Port Richey FL 34652. But we understand that not everyone can make it in person so we are also hosting the meeting on zoom for those who cannot attend in person. This year we have chosen to assist with the Pedal for Prevention event, focus our gratitude outreach to those in law enforcement, and also bring back our very successful Stronger Together Recovery Walk on September 24, 2022. The committee focuses on reducing stigma and works to give recovery allies and those in recovery a voice in our community. We advocate for recovery-related issues and bring everyone together for our common goal of reducing addiction and alcoholism with the hopes of overcoming the barriers to wellness. For more information, please email our Committee Co-Chairs Cesar Rodriguez at c.rodriguez@suncoastroofing.net, or Eve Hosley at Eve.Hosley@Baycare.org. The Recovery Committee meets the 4th Monday of every month at 5:00 pm. Everyone is invited!!! You do not have to be in recovery to attend .

RX / OPIOID COMMITTEE

Rx/Opioid committee has continued to meet since partnering with local agencies. We have continued to pass out Deterra bags into the community, with more than 1,000 distributed! We have also seen a growing number of attendance in our meetings! This will allow for more collaborations and impacts in our community. The committee meets the first Tuesday of every month.

Please email Parnia.Roghani@flhealth.gov or crystal.willson@baycare.org for more information.

SEN COMMITTEE

Our SEN committee is currently still meeting Virtual on Zoom. We have been focusing on education regarding Marijuana use and Pregnancy. Our goal is to educate those who are pregnant and women of child bearing age that no amount of Marijuana is safe during pregnancy. We are sharing infographics from the CDC and utilizing as conversation starters to those we serve in the community. Please join us for our monthly meeting on zoom the 2nd Wed of every month @ 10 AM.



Gear Up for the 2nd Annual Pedal for Prevention



PASCO COUNTY – In 2021 our nation hit 100,000 overdose deaths for the first time and Pasco County is feeling the direct impact of this national tragedy. Overdose death is completely preventable, and it is the mission of Alliance for Healthy Communities and Pasco ASAP to provide resources and save lives. Pasco needs us now more than ever.

Join us as we bike, walk, or run to raise awareness and inspire advocacy. Our 2nd Annual Pedal for Prevention works to create change, inspire youth, and increase health and wellbeing for all Pasco residents.

We are excited to partner with SWAMP Mountain Biking Club and offer a Guided Mountain Biking option, in addition to our “fun ride” along the paved bike path. Pedal for Prevention is on Saturday, May 7, 2022, from 9am to 12 Noon at Starkey Park, Pavilion B, 10500 Wilderness Park Blvd., New Port Richey. Adult participants are \$20 each, youth aged 12 and under are free. All proceeds go to prevent addiction in Pasco County and create a culture of sustainable recovery.

The Alliance for Healthy Communities and Pasco Alliance for Substance Addiction Prevention is on a

mission to bring people and agencies together to prevent addiction, raise awareness, inspire advocacy, and we didn't let the pandemic stop us! Last year's first Pedal for Prevention was a socially distant success, and we also hosted our signature events virtually. We were able to honor those lost from overdose at our annual NOPE Candlelight Vigil, featuring Nationally known author and advocate Ryan Hampton on to share his story of hope. We partnered with Pasco Sheriff's Office on the Rx/Opioid Taskforce and held a hugely popular virtual Town Hall. Additionally, we have distributed 3000 Deterra bags and information through our Dispose of Opioids for a Safer Community (DOSC) program. We hope to distribute even more! In honor of National Recovery Month, we hosted the Stronger Together Walk for Recovery showing that people can and do recover. These are just a few of our initiatives. Please visit empoweredcommunities.org to see all we do in Pasco County.

Do good, feel good. Support Pedal for Prevention today. To Register on EventBrite: [Click Here!](#)

For more information, Email: Eve.Hosley@Baycare.org or Missy.Coyle@Baycare.org



SAMHSA's National Prevention Week is from May 8th to the 14th, and is hitting its 10th anniversary this year. National Prevention Week focuses on bringing awareness to mental health and substance use disorders. It encourages taking action in one's community by being an agent of change in the conversation on mental health. According to the CDC, 1 in 5 children have a mental, emotional, or behavioral disorder, and only 20% receive specialized mental health care for the disorder. The CDC reports that early intervention and access to mental health services makes a difference for children and their families. This year, SAMHSA is doing a Prevention Challenge and is asking for youth community leaders to tag @SAMHSAGov and use the hashtag #YouthLeadingPrevention showing your prevention efforts.



PROM PROMISE

By Bonni Snider, MA, Co-Chair AIC

Each year, high school juniors and seniors look forward to the end of the year festivities. Probably the most anticipated event is prom. The excitement of picking out the perfect dress, a corsage, the limo and the after party. Unfortunately, some students will not make it home after prom as they will make the fateful decision to include alcohol and driving in their celebrations.

The statistics on teen driving crashes and fatalities are often staggering. The Center for Disease Control stated the top cause for teen death is automobile crashes. One-third occur between April and June (Insurance Institute for Highway Safety). AAA surveys indicate 31% of teens had planned to consume alcohol at prom. Additionally, each year, among youth aged 16-20, over 5,000 will die in a vehicular crash. 400,000 will be injured. Drivers aged 16 to 19 are four times more likely than other drivers to crash. Teenagers are more

likely to speed or tailgate. Among drivers between the ages of 15 and 20, 38% of the fatalities were male drivers and 24% had been drinking. It is also important to note, teens are less likely than adults to use a seatbelt.

The event, presented by the school's drama club, the Pasco County Sheriff, Fire and Rescue Department also includes a life flight and Dobie's Funeral Home. The scenario is youth driving from a prom, discussing having been drinking and eventually crashes. Fire, rescue and life flight arrive to tend to the injured. A distraught mother has the heartbreaking task of identifying her deceased daughter, and the hearse arrives to pick up the body. The last message of the presentation is a poem, written by the "daughter" to her mother, in which she asked why she was the one to die-she had promised not to drink, and did not. The impaired driver ran the red light and hit her.

Prom Promise includes a pledge that students agree to sign. The promise is to enjoy prom and come home safely, not only refuse to drink, but also not get into a car with someone who has been drinking. MADD and ASAP have collaborated on this event for several years. Our first event, on March 9 reached more than 1,000 students at Mitchell Ranch High School. Additional schools include Fivay, Zephyrhills, Wiregrass Ranch and Cypress Creek High Schools.

Jason Daniel Hughes Memorial Scholarship

To assist those seeking recovery with transitional living

More than eight years ago Jason Daniel Hughes died of an overdose. His loss, and the years spent trying to help him fight his addiction, galvanized his mom Kelly Mothershead to fight against substance misuse on a policy-level and to work to support those in recovery. She currently serves as an AHC Board Member.

In honor of her son, Jason, we have started the Jason Daniel Hughes Memorial Scholarship.

The scholarship will pay for the first month in a FARR Accredited transitional living house. We have identified that this is a gap where those starting a life in recovery can sometimes fall through. Transitional living is not covered by insurance, and those that leave in-patient treatment or incarceration are much more likely to return to substance use if they go back to their homes. The applicant can receive funds one time only, funds go directly to facility, not to person seeking housing. The average cost of one month at a transitional living house is \$742.00. If you would like to donate to the fund, please go to our website at empoweredcommunities.org and click the "donate" button. Please list "Jason" in the memo line.





Update on Pasco's Opioid Task Force

The Pasco County Opioid Task Force began in August 2021, whereby the Pasco County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) adopted Resolution No. 21-266 authorizing Pasco County to join with the State of Florida and other local governmental units. The Pasco County Opioid Task Force is a participant in the Memorandum of Understanding proposed by the Florida Attorney General for a unified plan for distribution of settlement proceeds received as a result of litigation against manufacturers, distributors, and retailers of opiates. The Pasco County Opioid Task Force will develop an Abatement Plan and advise the Board annually on the use and allocation of regional funds received by Pasco County in its role as a qualified county as part of the settlement funds received from the Opioid Litigation.

The Opioid Task Force membership is comprised of:

- Pasco County Fire Rescue representative
- Superintendent of Schools representative
- Pasco County Sheriff's Office representative
- Assistant County Administrator for the Public Services Branch representative
- City of New Port Richey representative
- City of Zephyrhills representative
- Pasco County Florida Department of Health representative
- A Subject-Matter Expert in public health or addiction employed by a provider of opioid-related services in Pasco County
- A Subject-Matter Expert in public health or addiction employed by a hospital system operating in Pasco County
- Chief Judge of the Sixth Judicial Circuit
- Pasco Alliance for Substance Addiction Prevention (Pasco ASAP) representative
- A Subject-Matter Expert in public health or addiction, who is retired.

The Task force had its first official meeting in October 2021, where they began to review the draft Abatement Plan to later present to the BCC, which was subsequently approved at the November 9, 2021 BCC Meeting. The plan will be revisited and revised on a quarterly basis to adopt any changes needed based on community needs, as a review of Pasco County's existing resources and opportunities continues with providers and stakeholders.

A second meeting was held in January 2022 where attorneys presented a Litigation assessment update to the group, and the Task Force Meeting Schedule was finalized and approved. It was previously decided the Task Force will meet quarterly in 2022 (April, July, and October) to continue with their goal to recommend funding, programs, services, and priorities for the coming years to the Pasco County Board of County Commissioners for the use and allocation of any regional settlement funds received as a result of the litigation.

The next Opioid Task Force meeting will be on Monday, April 25th at 10:00 AM in the New Port Richey Boardroom at the West Pasco Government Center located at 8731 Citizens Drive, New Port Richey.

For questions or inquiries, please reach out to Brian Hoben, Director of Community Services via e-mail at bhoben@mypasco.net. The meetings are open to the public and anyone who wishes to attend or address the Task Force is welcome to do so at that time. The meetings generally last a couple of hours and our upcoming meeting will include an update on the litigation process at the federal and state levels. For information regarding the agendas, you can find the most recent information here: <https://pascoconf.civicclerk.com/Web/Player.aspx?id=893&key=-1&mod=-1&mk=-1&nov=0>



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Florida Alliance

For State Advocacy

Advocacy and Education for Floridians

By Ashley Neal, State Lead

The Florida Alliance for State Advocacy (FASA) is an initiative of the National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers (NAATP) and is only the 2nd group of its kind to be formed in the United States. The mission of FASA is to provide advocacy education and opportunities for Floridians with a passion for helping individuals and their families facing addiction and mental health issues. Our members represent various interests in Florida, including but not limited to:

- Addiction treatment providers
- Judicial systems
- Prevention
- Government agencies
- Recovery support systems
- Impacted families
- Concerned citizens

FASA was formed in 2021 and we hit the ground running. We hosted a total of five virtual meetings to discuss things like advocacy, past legislative actions that impacted people seeking treatment and recovery and what exactly our group members believed to be the most important issues to address.

One thing we knew early on was that we wanted to host a Recovery Hill Day in the Florida Capitol. As people continued to join FASA we quickly realized that not too many of us had experience with advocacy and even less of us had ever actually met with legislators. Thankfully, we knew where to turn for help. Representatives from the Drug Free America Foundation (DFAF) and the Florida Coalition Alliance (FCA) had a lot of experience for us to learn from through their past trips to Tallahassee.

We partnered with DFAF to plan Advocacy Day 2022. We collaborated to draft one pager that focused on two key issues: Mental Health & Addiction Parity and Equal Access to Treatment. Marijuana legalization was also a hot topic during the 2022 legislative session, so we put together information to address our concerns with that as well. We held a webinar to provide additional training

on advocacy, provided by a representative from CADCA and we hosted a few Advocacy Day prep meetings prior to making the journey to the Capitol.

On January 19, 2022, we showed up in full force at 8am on the Rotunda of the Capitol Building for Advocacy Day. Our group was represented by people from all over Florida and made up of both prevention and treatment advocates. Here are a few highlights from the day:

- Approximately 50 adults and 25 youth were in attendance
- As a group we met with over 70 legislators
- Testimony was given by members of our group to address SB282 and HB795 (Peer Specialists Bill)
- Doug Simon, Director of the Florida Office of Drug Control met with the group as well as with individuals for scheduled meetings

Immediately after Advocacy Day we heard that the Peer Specialist bill (which was introduced by Senator Darryl Rouson) was moving through the Senate rather quickly AND there was mention of our group meeting with law makers to advocate on behalf of those most closely impacted by the restrictions addressed in the bill. That was pretty cool!

I am happy to report that as the 2022 session drew to a close, the Peer Specialist Bill was passed and made its way to the Governors desk and he signed it into law on March 10th! The Peer Specialist bill goes into effect July 1, 2022.

Moving forward, FASA will continue to assess the interests of its members and the needs of individuals and their families facing addiction and mental health issues. We are looking ahead to the 2023 Legislative Session, which will begin in just 11 short months. February 2023 will be here before you know it!

We are open to anyone who would like to join our cause. Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 23rd at 11am on Zoom. Please contact Ashley Neal at aneal@tpoftampa.com for more information.



RESEARCH AND COALITION METRICS Q1 *(January, February, March 2022)*

ASAP Coalition Metrics

Check out our outputs for the quarter:

Outreach Initiatives: This quarter, ASAP members have continued to socially distance via Zoom per regular monthly Recovery Committee met in person and Zoom hybrid meeting. SEN Knowledge is Power: Converse with a Nurse Virtual Series has reached 216 people for the quarter. Opioid Townhall hosted by the RX Committee more than 200 people.

ASAP Tabled events: Light Up the Night Wiregrass 1/22/22; Family Fun festival and Health Fair at Pasco Hernando State College West Campus 2/5/22; . Dementia Spotlight Annual Health Fair 2/15/22; Pepin Academy Speakers Request 2/17/22; Storybook Forest at Crew's Lake Park 3/5/22; Health and Safety Fair Wiregrass Ranch High School 3/9/22; Richey Elementary School 3/9/22.

Social Media: ASAP reached 42.6 K people via social media this quarter.

Medication Dropoff: Pasco Sheriff's Office, 2022 Quarter 1, has collected 317.4 pounds of medication.

Deterra Bags: Project DOSC, the Deterra Bag Project, handed out 3,000 medication disposal bags for the year and continues to hand out DOSC kits.

Narcan: Grace House distributed 6,000 doses of Narcan into the community this quarter, focusing on "hot spot" geographical areas of reported overdose.

Narcan Deployments: Pasco County Sheriff's Office Report: February 2022 Overdoses: 131 total overdoses in February (11% increase from January). Overdoses have decreased since April of 2021 from 174 to 131 (25% decrease). Fatal Overdoses: 31 fatal overdoses in February • 24% fatality rate (February)- Top of the range (16- 20%) • Widespread Narcan distribution has led to a reduction in overdose deaths Primary Narcotic Responsible for Overdoses: Heroin/Fentanyl is still the most problematic. Heroin and fentanyl are responsible for at least 35% of all documented overdoses.

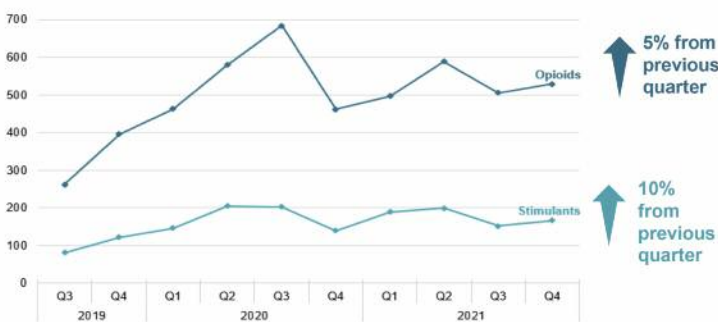


Pasco County Quarterly Overdose Report

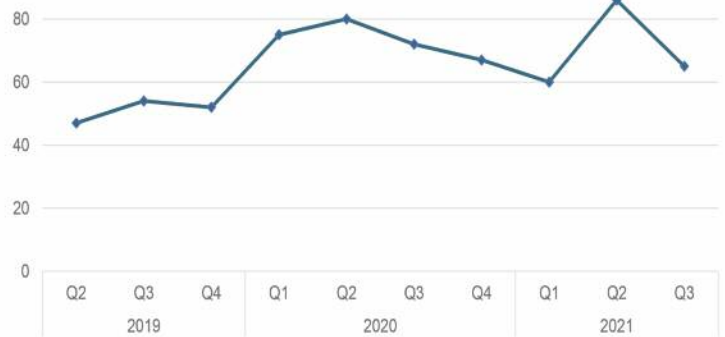


Overdose surveillance helps to maintain situational awareness, respond to trends rapidly and inform prevention and treatment activities.

Emergency Department (ED) Visits for Suspected Overdose by Quarter¹



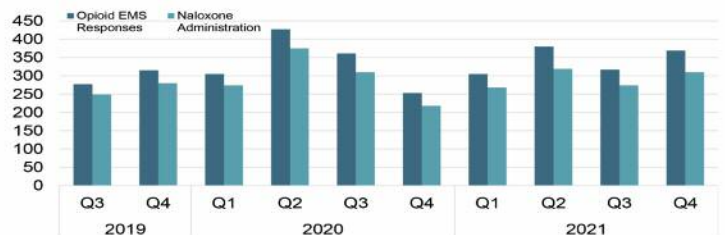
Overdose-Related Fatalities⁴



Q4 2021 Suspected All Drug Overdose ED Visits Demographics²



Overdose-Related Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Responses³



- The information from the graph above was retrieved from Florida's syndromic surveillance system, the Electronic Surveillance System for the Early Notification of Community-Based Epidemics (ESSENCE-FL). The information in the graph displays opioid- and stimulant-involved ED visits in Pasco County facilities. It is important to note that some visits may not be directly related to opioid or stimulant overdoses at time of visit. Individuals who have a history of opioid or stimulant dependence admitted to the ED are also included in the numbers above. Additionally, ED data are provisional and may change as new information is received.
- Graphs display the demographics of all drug-involved ED visits at Pasco County facilities retrieved from ESSENCE-FL. Within the race/ethnicity chart: Other, Non-Hispanic includes those who reported their race as American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Multiracial, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander or Other; Hispanic includes all races who reported their ethnicity as Hispanic; those who reported their race and/or ethnicity as Unknown were excluded.
- Graph displays data retrieved from Biospatial and shows EMS response calls for suspected opioid overdoses and naloxone administrations.
- Graph displays data captured from death records retrieved from ESSENCE-FL and shows drug and biological substance poisoning deaths (X40-44, X60-64 and Y10-14).



Data Spotlight

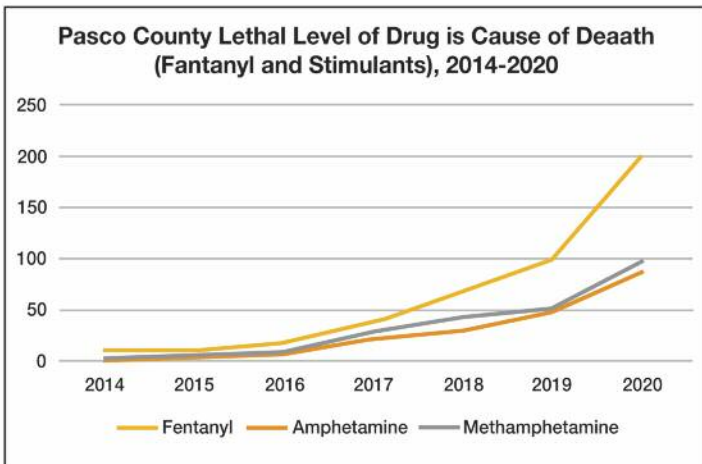
By Abbey Shockley, MPH

If the opioid crisis has taught communities anything, it is that the infrastructure to address substance use disorder as a whole is critical. Many times, funding is directed at specific substances but our systems know all too well that it is common for people to engage in poly substance use (using more than one substance) and that resources need to allow for treatment of addiction broadly vs. any one substance of concern.

A recent report from the Florida Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association and the Florida Department of Children and Families identified polysubstance use as an area to pay attention to, specifically when looking at fatalities associated with opioids and stimulants. This statewide trend mirrors Pasco County’s experience, with rates of methamphetamine-related fatalities rising at rates similar to that of fentanyl-related fatalities over the last three years.

What this data tells us is that while regulations and controls have been successful in reducing access to prescription opioids, attention needs to be paid to developing initiatives that curb fatal overdoses associated with fentanyl use and treatment providers may need to shift attention and expertise to treatment of stimulants. Unfortunately, unlike opioids, there is no FDA-approved medication currently available for treatment of stimulant use disorders.

When communities have limited resources to address these issues, it is important to use data to determine where priorities and investments should focus and which subpopulations should be targeted to achieve the greatest impact on prevention, treatment and recovery trajectories. ASAP monitors local and statewide trends regularly to inform our efforts and maintain programs that are in line with data and emerging issues.



Pasco ASAP Outreach

Health & Safety Fair March 9, 2022



ASAP participated in the annual SADD Health & Safety Fair at Wiregrass Ranch High School. During the event, ASAP’s Sandy Soares provided a table filled with resources focusing on the prevention of substance misuse. The health fair provided this opportunity to reach more than 1,000 students! Many approached the table requesting information on Marijuana, alcohol, and prescription drugs for education as well as being able to share the information with peers. STAND Above the Influence Coalition information was also provided to students as an option for positive peer support.

Richey Elementary Roundup



ASAP was there to support the families of Richey Elementary School at their annual fun night, Richey Round-Up. The event was tabled by ASAP’s Eve Hosley Moore (left) and Youth and Family Alternatives’ CSC Counselors Allison Corsones and Anita Grates. We reached more than 150 families!



Mental Health Awareness Month

by Erica Metzler

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, what can you do to help destigmatize mental health? Mental Health Awareness Month has been around since 1949 and was created to bring awareness to mental health conditions and the importance of taking care of one's health. Below are some tips on how to fight stigma from the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), and resources for if you or someone you know needs mental health services.



Common WARNING SIGNS of Mental Illness

Diagnosing mental illness isn't a straightforward science. We can't test for it the same way we can test blood sugar levels for diabetes. Each condition has its own set of unique symptoms, though symptoms often overlap. Common signs and/or symptoms can include:

- Feeling very sad or withdrawn for more than two weeks
- Trying to harm or end one's life or making plans to do so
- Severe, out-of-control, risk-taking behavior that causes harm to self or others
- Sudden overwhelming fear for no reason, sometimes with a racing heart, physical discomfort or difficulty breathing
- Significant weight loss or gain
- Seeing, hearing or believing things that aren't real*
- Excessive use of alcohol or drugs
- Drastic changes in mood, behavior, personality or sleeping habits
- Extreme difficulty concentrating or staying still
- Intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities

*Across communities and backgrounds might view the sign differently based on true belief and experience. Some people within these communities and cultures may not interpret feeling "scared" as unusual.

WORRIED ABOUT YOURSELF OR SOMEONE YOU CARE ABOUT?

- If you notice any of these symptoms, it's important to ask questions
- Try to understand what they're experiencing and how their daily life is impacted
- Making this connection is often the first step to getting treatment

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

- Talk with a health care professional
- Learn more about mental illness
- Take a mental health education class
- Call the NAMI HelpLine at 800-950-NAMI (6264)

50% of all lifetime mental illness begins by age **14**

75% by age **24**

Data from CDC, NAMI and other select sources. Find citations for this resource at nami.org/infodata

NAMI HelpLine 800-950-NAMI (6264) | NAMI | NAMICommunicate | NAMICommunicate | www.nami.org | National Alliance on Mental Illness

Reducing Stigma for Mental Health

Talk openly about mental health

If someone broke their leg, you wouldn't tell them to walk it off, and mental health care is just as important for one's overall health. It is okay to talk about mental health care because it is a normal part of taking care of overall health.

Encourage Equality Between Physical and Mental Illness

Ignoring or minimizing mental health issues can cause worsening mental health and worsening of one's overall health.

Show Compassion

Listen when someone talks to you about their struggles with their mental health, and encourage them to get the care they need.

Get the help you need

Do not let stigma prevent you from getting the treatment you need, it is okay to need help and getting the help you need will improve your overall health and quality of life.

Adult BayCare Services
BayCare offers services in Hernando, Hillsborough, Pasco, Pinellas, and Polk counties.
(866) 762-1743 to schedule an appointment.

Child and Adolescent BayCare Services

Children's Treatment Center
King Helie Boulevard, New Port Richey
(727) 834-3959 8132

Outpatient Center
15311 Cortez Boulevard, Brooksville
(727) 834-3959 8132





One-On-One, A Conversation

By Bonni Snider, MA, Co-Chair, Alcohol Initiatives Committee

One of the missions of the Alcohol Initiative Committee is to reduce access to alcohol by underage youth. The environmental scans and presentations are just two ways we collect data in order to develop strategies to keep alcohol out of the hands of youth. Another mechanism is the one-on-one conversations. A 2020 statistics of Pasco county middle and high school students revealed an 8.1 percent and 25.4 percent, respectively, past 30-day alcohol use. Compared to the statewide statistic, middle school students were on par with the state, high school students, however, scored higher. Students reported (43.1%) gaining access to alcohol because someone else provided it to them. Based on these statistics and in an effort to address and reduce these stated, Communities Mobilizing Change on Alcohol (CMCA) was formed.

CMCA is a “multi-step, community organizing process, designed by community members (including youth) and led by a community organizer that combines policy, law enforcement and communications strategies to prevent underage drinking.” The objectives include reducing commercial and social sources of alcohol to

underage youth and influence community attitudes and norms regarding underage drinking.

The one-on-one conversations, designed to gauge community members’ attitudes toward underage alcohol use is an approximately 15 minute conversation. The sectors of the community the one-on-ones may be conducted include government, health care, youth, parks and recreations, parents, senior citizens, the elderly, faith based leaders, law enforcement, media, social services, neighbors, businesses and community based organizations. Additional sectors include communities of color and those who have English as a second language.

This year, the Alcohol Initiative Committee is collecting no less than 100 one-on-ones. We will then collate and analyze the data, develop a strategy based on the responses and eventually develop policy proposal to present to policy makers for implementation.

AIC continues to encourage community partners to assist in these initiatives. Partners can participate in the one-on-ones by agreeing to sit for a conversation; or be willing to assist in collecting the data.



DID YOU KNOW?

Marijuana and Pregnancy Don't Mix

Brought to you by the ASAP SEN Committee

Marijuana is the most widely used substance during pregnancy in the United States. Marijuana use is on the rise among all adult age groups, sexes, and pregnant women. Marijuana remains illegal at the Federal level while some states have legalized it for recreational and medicinal use. This has had a huge impact on Marijuana's social acceptance rates in the United States. Approximately 1 in 25 women in the U.S. report using marijuana while pregnant and there are many factors one must consider on the impact Marijuana may have on mom and baby.

A mother's marijuana use during pregnancy can be harmful to the development of the fetus, newborn, and child as they grow. The chemical tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is stored in the mother's fat cells and slowly released over time. It passes through the placenta and breast milk to the baby. Research from the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) shows that using marijuana while pregnant can cause low birth weight and put the pregnancy at higher risk of premature birth and stillbirth in women. Babies exposed to THC for a longer amount of time through breast-feeding can continue to see a disruption in the brain's development and behavioral issues. Frequent or long-term marijuana exposure is also linked to school dropout and lower educational achievement. It is important to note this includes, but is not limited to, edible marijuana products in any form. To reduce risk factors, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends against using marijuana during your pregnancy and while breastfeeding.

Medical marijuana is NOT safer than recreational marijuana for pregnant women. There is no evidence to date that Marijuana helps morning sickness, only an increased risk for complications with Marijuana use in any form. Pregnant and breast-feeding mothers should avoid marijuana before pregnancy and while breastfeeding to increase protective factors for the healthiest outcomes. If someone is using any substance during pregnancy and needs help, local resources are listed below. Patients are always encouraged to talk to their OBGYN and Primary Care doctor before, after and during pregnancy regarding any substance use as part of all routine health care.

Local Resources

BayCare Behavioral Health	1-866-762-1743
Healthy Start Coalition	727-841-7888
Operation PAR.....	727-816-1200
Healthy Families	727-845-8080
Empowered Communities.org/Resources	



Human Trafficking and Homeland Security

*By Liana Dean, MSW, Human Trafficking chair
and Makayla Damato*

The Pasco County Commission on Human Trafficking partnered with the Department of Homeland Security to host a training for middle and high school students at the East Pasco Education Academy on the dangers of on-line exploitation. Students learned about the techniques that predators and traffickers use to recruit youth through social media and chat features on gaming systems, the dangers of sexting, and the legal ramifications for sharing sexually exploitative material with one another. Agents discussed the traumatic, long lasting impact that being sexually exploited online can have on youth to include mental health issues and lifetime notifications from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) each time a sexually exploitative image of them is downloaded. Case examples from Pasco County were used to illustrate that this is a problem that is happening here and that anyone, regardless of gender, socio-economic status, or sexual orientation, can be exploited. Students were encouraged to NEVER communicate with people on social media or gaming systems who they have not met in person or to EVER share nude or sexually explicit photos of themselves with ANYONE. If students believe that they, or someone they know, is a victim on online exploitation they are encouraged to immediately seek help from a trusted adult. Anyone wishing to report online exploitation should contact local law enforcement or reach out to the NCMEC Tip Line at 1-800-843-5678.



STAND ABOVE THE INFLUENCE

Powered by Alliance for Healthy Communities

Car Wash Fundraiser

Proceeds will go to STAND Above the Influence Youth Team
\$10 PER TICKET FOR \$20 DELUXE CAR WASH AT TIDAL WAVE



GO AT YOUR OWN CONVENIENCE

Locations:

3500 Tampa Road • Oldsmar, Florida 34677
3893 Atmore Grove Drive • Lutz, Florida 33548
2209 Sun Vista Drive • Lutz, Florida 33559

For questions, please contact: stand@empoweredcommunities.org



STAND MISSION

STAND Above the Influence is a youth led coalition that empowers youth to be agents of change by strengthening their voices and educating others to build a healthier community.

STAND VISION

To inspire innovative communities that embrace the voices of youth to affect positive change in cultivating safe and healthy communities.

CONTACT INFORMATION

STAND@empoweredcommunities.org
7809 Massachusetts Ave. • New Port Richey, FL 34653
www.empoweredcommunities.org

STAND 2022 Priority Issues

- Youth Mental Health
- Youth Drug Use
- Underage Drinking
- Impaired Driving
- Tobacco and Vaping Use
- Safety
- Violence
- Bullying

STAND is Announcing a New In-Person Meeting!

1st Thursday of each month at the New Port Richey Recreation Center: 6630 Van Buren Street, New Port Richey, 34653. In the Oak Room - 5:30pm - 6:30pm. All are welcome! **See flyer on Page 17**

STAND is on Social Media



STAND is staying connected via Remind App.
Email: Stand@pascoasap.com or text 352-345-0685 to be added to the conversation



STAND in Pasco County
#STANDUpPasco



stand_up_pasco



Stand_up_Pasco



StandupPasco

STAND General Coalition Meeting Location:

4:45PM on Zoom, room opens at 4:30PM

Zoom Link

3rd Tuesday of the month

Meeting ID: 818 9843 4542

Password: 742597

For more information, please reach out to Eve Hosley-Moore. STAND Events Coordinator and Advisor at: stand@empoweredcommunities.org or text or call 352-345-0685.



Powered by Alliance for Healthy Communities

STAND Meeting With Cpl. Norris February 03, 2022

by Makayla Damato



STAND Above the Influence members are now meeting in person on the 1st Thursday of each month at the New Port Richey Recreational Center. During the first meeting, members discussed wanting to highlight the overwhelming concerns students have about school safety. Many students past and present in STAND are voicing their concerns that safety is an issue in their respective schools throughout Pasco County. Members invited Corporal Norris, SRO Supervisor, to the next meeting held March 3rd. Corporal Norris met with the STAND members via Zoom and had an engaging conversation regarding ways that students can feel safe. Corporal Norris stated that she will take all the concerns and information they discussed to the SRO Joint meeting for the entire county. Change has started with one conversation! Change starts with YOU(TH)!

The Great Escape!

by Makayla Damato

The STAND Coalition held their Great Escape event on March 21, 2022 at Time Trap Escape Room in New Port Richey. There were 15 students in attendance, including president, Jocelyn Meriwether, and vice president, Maddie Horn. All students received new tie-dyed STAND t-shirts and enjoyed lunch while Jocelyn and Maddie presented to the students about what STAND is and past events that the students have done over the years. After that, the students were given the opportunity to bond with other coalition members and STAND advisors by completing an escape room together. The youth had a great time and hope to see even more students at upcoming events and projects that they are working on as they continue to grow throughout Pasco County.

STAND is open to all middle and high school students in Pasco County who want to make a difference and make their voices heard to join them at their monthly meetings, check out our meeting list for details.



CHANGE BEGINS WITH YOU(TH)!

Monthly Youth Advocacy Meeting

1st THURSDAY of the Month
5:30-6:30 pm

STAND is a coalition of youth leaders determined to end youth substance misuse in Pasco County by providing education to teachers, police, businesses, and other community members. STAND focuses on:

- Youth Mental Health
- Leadership Skills
- Drug & Alcohol Prevention & Education
- Advocacy



STAND ABOVE THE INFLUENCE

1st Thursday of the Month
April 7, 2022 - May 5, 2022
June 2, 2022 - July 7, 2022
August 4, 2022

New Port Richey Recreation Center – Oak Room

6630 Van Buren Street, New Port Richey FL 34653
OPEN TO ALL MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
Volunteer Hours & Snacks

For more information, email: Eve.Hosley@Baycare.org OR Sandra.Soares@Baycare.org
Visit our Website: www.empoweredcommunities.org/STAND



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Spotlight

by Sharon Schmidt



Mariah is our STAND Above the Influence Outstanding Youth in the Spotlight with an amazing story that is being told by her STAND advisor and mentor Sharon Schmidt since 6th grade at Chasco Middle School, her best friend Jocelyn Meriwether (Now STAND President) and of course her beautiful Mom, Haydelin Morales sent me some of the pictures.

So doing a story on the beautiful, funny, amazing young lady kind of makes me emotional as I've had the honor & privilege of spending a tad over 7 years with Mariah watching her grow and she has truly been a blessing in my life and still is watching her grow from a little girl in 6th grade to this amazing beautiful young strong woman about to graduate from Wendell Krinn Technical High School majoring in Bio-Medical and receiving news that she was accepted in Pasco-Hernando State College in the Surgical Technology Program which puts her on her path to becoming someone phenomenal in the medical field. Though she has not quite decided on what, she knows the medical field is where she wants to be. Mariah's goal to help people has always been significant in her life and she strives to continue helping people no matter where she is and no matter where her future takes her.

As a STAND member for 7+ years one would ask her "why are you in STAND?" and she would tell you that addiction resulting in the death of a loved one affected her life when she was younger, and she doesn't want others to feel the pain she felt and still feels. Mariah has been to the Capital of Florida in Tallahassee several times advocating for change in Pasco County schools, peers, families and communities against underage drinking, substance misuse, tobacco & vaping, dating violence, bullying prevention, mental health wellness and so many other issues near & dear to her big heart with our Florida's decision makers.

Mariah doesn't hesitate to talk with peers in school about the importance of being drug free, the consequences and repercussions and that alcohol and drugs will stop them from succeeding in life as they grow up and to aim high for their goals all the while she recruits peers into STAND community events, Mariah was front and center, I remember when she was getting ready to do a live Facebook

Podcast for STAND, she was so nervous saying "Ms. Sharon I can't do this" of course you can and yes, she rocked. Mariah was also a guest speaker with Jocelyn Meriwether (red) and Annabelle Dorff, 2 STAND youth & Chrissie Parris of ASAP on a talk show BaySide Tampa Bay and once again did phenomenal. The Alliance for Substance Addiction Prevention does a yearly STAND Youth Discussion Panel in July and Mariah has been on at least 4 panels having so much to say each time with her STAND peers making sure the community knows what it's like to be a kid today and the obstacles many youths face. Mariah is about positive change, advocacy, and without any doubt she will continue to strive for positive changes in youth, families, peers, schools & communities.

Mariah was Youth Volunteer of the Year with the Alliance for Substance Addiction Prevention, STAND President for 4 years, and is an active Mentor to new STAND youth and encouraging the students in her school Wendell Krinn Technical High School to join STAND and be the change. When Mariah was a freshman, she recruited 15 students from her school - pretty good huh?

While finishing her senior year Mariah started working, bought her first car and is gearing up for college - oh how time flies....

Please join us in congratulating Mariah in all of her achievements and her future endeavors

Jocelyn Meriwether, STAND's current President, had this to say about her friend, "Mariah is the sweetest most genuine person I've met. I joined STAND when I was in sixth grade, and she brought me into STAND with open arms. Mariah is the type of person no matter how long it has been since you've seen her or talked to her, she would answer the phone in a heartbeat. When I met Mariah, I knew I found my forever sister. Mariah has worked so hard in STAND and still is building her future. Mariah is very determined and motivated. No matter who walks into our program or who she meets, she always makes sure to welcome them and help them in any endeavors they may face. Mariah is a mentor to many and family to us all. I will always look up to her in everything I face in life, and I will always know she has my back because she is "my forever sister".