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One Pill Can Kill: The Fentanyl Crisis **April 26, May 3, and May 10 Awareness Events**

(HASTINGS, MN) United Way of Hastings (UWH) is offering three educational sessions to build awareness of opioids and fentanyl poisonings. The sessions are the result of collaborative efforts amongst parents, city and county governments/law enforcement, the faith community, healthcare community, school district, and others.

“Per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in December of 2021, overdoses and drug poisonings are now the leading cause of deaths of individuals ages 18-45. Fentanyl is the cause of most of those deaths,” said UWH Executive Director, Mari Mellick, CAE. “This should be alarming to people. Many that have been impacted by fentanyl poisonings already know the danger. It’s the community at-large and young people that have no idea the deadly consequences of making a mistake, and for whatever reason, may purchase what they think is Percocet or Adderall from social media, only to find that it’s been laced with deadly fentanyl. The educational sessions will give community members an opportunity to learn what we are facing as a community, county, and state.”

UWH indicates that everyone is impacted by the fentanyl crisis whether it’s a grandparent, sibling, cousin, community member. The sessions are free and open to the public except the May 10 session which is for adults and parents only.

April 26 – the first session is a viewing of the documentary film “Dead On Arrival” by Dominic Tierno and Christine Wood followed by a panel discussion with:
-parents Bridgette Norring and Amy Neville. Bridgette is from Hastings and lost her son Devin in April 2020 to fentanyl poisoning. Amy lost her son, Alexander Hastings Neville, at the age of 14, to fentanyl poisoning and established the Alexander Neville Foundation to build awareness and address the usage of social media to purchase fake drugs.
-Dakota County Chief Deputy Joe Leko
-Dakota County Captain, Drug Task Force Commander Bryan Hermerding
-Hastings Police Chief Bryan Schafer
-Hastings Police School Resource Officer Jacob Willers
-Hastings High School Counselor Drew Cooper
-Allina Clinic/Hastings Regina Campus Licensed Alcohol & Drug Counselor Justin Thomas

May 3 – the second session will be presentations by the following and Q&A:
-Dakota County Drug Task Force, discussing what fentanyl is, the danger of opioids, what we are facing in the county and locally; seized drugs will be displayed

- Tiffany Neuharth, Rise Up Recovery, discussing addiction and usage of Narcan
- Justin Thomas from Allina, discussing treatment strategies and options

May 10 - the third session is the Top Secret Project, an interactive simulation of a teen's bedroom that will help parents identify drug usage in the household, open to adults and parents only; led by:

- Hastings Police Community Engagement Officer Whitney Rinowski
- ISD197 Chemical Health Director and Intermediate ISD917 Chemical Health Coordinator Ann Lindgren

All events will have resource booths available from a variety of groups. Further details and registration are at: <https://unitedwayofhastings.org/site/onepillcankill/>. Registration is encouraged to help assess attendance numbers as well as allow for online pre- and post-event evaluations by attendees.

The educational sessions are sponsored by: Allina Health, Dakota County Sheriff's Office, Factory Motor Parts, and Our Saviour's Lutheran Church.

The UWH is an independent United Way that has worked for nearly 60 years serving Hastings and the surrounding rural communities within Independent School District #200. Its mission is to build collaborative partnerships to improve the lives of people in our community. For more information and to donate, visit www.unitedwayofhastings.org.

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