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Illicit Fentanyl: As Easy As Ordering a Pizza
July 13 Virtual Webinar
One Pill Can Kill: The Fentanyl Poisoning Crisis

(HASTINGS, MN) United Way of Hastings (UWH) continues to offer public awareness events to build awareness of fentanyl poisoning, reduce the stigma of overdoses, and provide resources. The next event is on Thursday, July 13 from 7:00 am – 8:00 am and is titled, *Illicit Fentanyl: As Easy As Ordering a Pizza*. The free offering is a virtual webinar and will highlight how social media platforms are targeting individuals for drug sales.

“I had no idea that kids and adults are ordering illicit drugs on social media platforms like Snapchat, and having the drugs delivered right to their homes,” said UWH Executive Director, Mari Mellick, CAE. “This is alarming. It’s as easy as ordering a pizza.”

Illicit fentanyl is involved in more deaths of Americans under 50 than any cause of death, including heart disease, cancer, homicide, suicide and other accidents according to the US Drug Enforcement Administration. With the increased usage of cell phones and the internet, illicit fentanyl is being widely distributed via social media platforms.

Speakers for the webinar are Laura Carlisle and Mari Mellick. Carlisle has been a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor for nearly ten years and is currently a counselor at Allina Health - Hastings Regina Campus. She will speak about the crisis of fentanyl poisonings and the ease of obtaining illicit drugs via social media. Webinar attendees will learn how drug dealers are targeting individuals on social media platforms and common emojis used in drug dealings.

Mellick has spent over 25 years in executive nonprofit management, ten of which have been as Executive Director of the United Way of Hastings, and has been leading the fentanyl poisoning awareness efforts in the Hastings community and Dakota County, as well as throughout the State of Minnesota United Way network. Mellick will speak about webs of support using UWH’s Helping Kids Succeed model. Parental tips for social media oversight and the importance of building webs of support for both adults and kids will be covered during the webinar.

The early time of the webinar (7:00 am – 8:00 am) and virtual capabilities are to allow for the most participation of attendees, accommodating summer schedules and not conflicting with the many summer activities during the day and evenings.

Details and registration can be found at:
<https://unitedwayofhastings.org/site/onepillcankill/>.

The session is the result of collaborative efforts amongst parents, city and county governments/law enforcement, the faith community, healthcare community, school district, and others. These efforts are the continuation of UWH's series on One Pill Can Kill: The Fentanyl Poisoning Crisis.

The UWH is an independent United Way that has worked for over 55 years serving Hastings and the surrounding rural communities within Independent School District #200. Its mission is to build partnerships to improve the lives of people in our community. Donations are accepted year-round. For more information about the UWH and the agencies it funds, visit www.unitedwayofhastings.org.

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