

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** September 11, 2023  
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***Back to School: What Every Parent Needs to Know  
About Fentanyl Poisoning***  
**September 19 Panel Discussion & Simulated Teen Bedroom**  
**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 Tuesday, September 19 from 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm and is titled, *Back to School: What Every Parent Needs to Know About Fentanyl Poisoning*. The event is being held at the Hastings High School Auditorium. Doors open at 6:00 pm and several organizations will be available with information and resources in the auditorium foyer. The panel discussion and audience Q&A is from 6:30 pm – 7:30 pm. Then from 7:30 pm – 8:30 pm, there will be a brief presentation regarding signs of drug usage with a simulated teen bedroom that attendees can walk through. The free offering is a parent and adult only event and is being sponsored by Allina Health.

“UWH continues to work with many community partners to build awareness on fentanyl poisoning, the ease of obtaining illicit fentanyl, and it’s deadly outcomes,” said UWH Executive Director, Mari Mellick, CAE. “We continue to alert the community that this is a crisis and hope to capture parents and other adults as kids head back to school. The illicit fentanyl keeps coming in alarming quantities.”

The latest updates on the local fentanyl poisoning crisis and overdoses in the community will be provided by law enforcement, the education community, healthcare community, & others with a good portion of time set aside for Q&A from attendees.

**Panelists:**

- Sheriff Joe Leko, Dakota County
- Capt Josh Fahey, Commander Dakota County Drug Task Force
- Chief Dave Wilske, Hastings Police Dept
- Charlie Black, Hastings Middle School Counselor
- Tiffany Neuharth, Rise Up Recovery

After the first hour of the program, there will be a brief presentation on the signs of drug use and ways teens may disguise drug usage. Tips for talking with children will be covered. The speakers will also cover the signs of overdose, the Good Samaritan Law, and webs of support. Event attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions and walk through a simulated teen bedroom.

Simulated Teen Bedroom Presenters:

- Laura Carlisle, MA, LADC, Allina Health
- Justin Thomas, LADC, Allina Health

Registration is recommended at:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/back-to-school-what-every-parent-needs-to-know-about-fentanyl-poisoning-tickets-714085949297?aff=oddtcreator>

More event details can be found at: <https://unitedwayofhastings.org/site/onepillcankill/>.

UWH 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. The event 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.

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.

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 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](http://www.unitedwayofhastings.org).

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