



# ADDRESSING THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC THROUGH LOCAL AND STATE PARTNERSHIPS

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## BACKGROUND

### Phoenix Area Indian Health Service

- Provides services to 45 tribes in 4 states (AZ, CA, NV, and UT)
- 16 field-based Environmental Health staff
- 4 dedicated Injury Prevention staff

### Opioid issue in Arizona:

- Opioid-related deaths in AZ increased 74% since 2012.<sup>2</sup>
- In 2016, there were over 1500 drug overdose deaths in AZ; over 50% contributed to Opioids.<sup>2</sup>

### American Indian/Alaskan Native rate:

- Opioid-related deaths, hospitalizations, and ED visits increased 310% from 2008-2016.<sup>2</sup>

Picture 2



Picture 1



## ACTIONS

### Local Partnerships

Local partners included the Community Health Representative (CHR) program, Public Health Nursing, Pharmacy, Elder Nutrition Programs, and Housing.

### Focus Groups

- Ten focus groups among elders and CHRs were facilitated by DEHS staff to determine the acceptability of using medication lock boxes in the home environment
- N=101 participants; 6 Phoenix Area Tribes
- Four different types of lock boxes were demonstrated
- Ten focus group questions
- Results strongly supported that elders would use lock boxes to secure their medications

### Medication Lock Boxes (Pilot project)

- N=55 lock boxes installed, 9 Phoenix Area Tribes
- Inclusion: High-risk (55+, prior RX theft, chronic pain opioid Rx)
- Evaluation in 30 and 60 days
- 30 day results = **89%** of the lock boxes were locked and meds visually observed
- 60 day results = **95%** of the lock boxes were locked and meds visually observed

### State Partnerships

State partnerships included Arizona Department of Health Services and Nevada Department of Health and Human Services.

### Naloxone

- Tribal first responders receive Naloxone nasal spray packs from their state health agencies at no charge.
- Developing tool for evaluation of Naloxone use by tribal first responders
- N= **568** Naloxone doses; 13 tribes and tribal organizations

### Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) training

- Training provided by NV Center for the Application of Substance Abuse Tech.
- 24 providers from tribal facilities trained

### Improving data quality

- Facilitated the process for tribes to submit post mortem blood samples for toxicology screenings to the state at no charge.
- Improve fatality injury data (post mortem blood draws when autopsies are not completed due to remoteness, cost, or invasiveness of procedure)
- Includes sampling equipment, shipping, laboratory analysis, and reports

## Local & State Partnerships

### Medication Disposal

- DEHS encouraged the use of medication disposal mechanisms at healthcare facilities
- N=3 medication disposal drop boxes available at PHX Area IHS healthcare facilities
- **247 lbs.** of medications have been disposed in drop boxes in 6 months in two tribes
- N=1300 drug deactivation systems were provided to tribes at no charge
- **482** unused/expired meds at the home have been disposed of via the drug deactivation systems in 2 tribal communities through partnerships

## NEXT STEPS

- Connect tribes to local healthcare facilities via MOUs for Naloxone
- Conduct an Opioid-specific epidemiology project for PHX service population
- Evaluate the medication lock box pilot project based on the focus group findings
- Advocate medication safety disposal practices, including developing a home-based medication disposal program

Picture 3



Picture 4



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