

Iowa Department of Public Health
Division of Behavioral Health
Opioid Update for Wednesday, May 30, 2018

The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) offers the Opioid Update to share information about opioid use and Iowa's efforts to address the national opioid epidemic. Please feel free to submit topics to Julie Jones at julie.jones@idph.iowa.gov.

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Opioid News

FDA approves non-opioid for opioid withdrawal symptoms

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) last week approved the first non-opioid medication for the treatment of opioid withdrawal symptoms. Lucemyra (generic name: lofexidine) was shown to result in less severe withdrawal symptoms and to facilitate completion of a withdrawal protocol in two placebo-controlled studies.

Lucemyra, which suppresses the neurochemical surge that produces troubling symptoms of opioid withdrawal that include muscle spasms, stomach cramps and heart pounding, is expected to be available in the U.S. market in August. Officials at drug maker US WorldMeds referred to the FDA's action as a "milestone approval," given that the challenge of opioid withdrawal often can get overlooked in discussions of how to address the opioid crisis. The fear and pain associated with withdrawal symptoms often sends individuals back to opioid use. The FDA reviewed the drug application for Lucemyra under its priority review procedures.

Lucemyra is seen as having significant potential for patients seeking to be initiated on injectable naltrexone treatment for opioid dependence, as this requires a patient to be completely opioid-free prior to initiation. The medication is designed to be used during the period of peak withdrawal symptoms, usually occurring five to seven days after last use of opioids.

For more information on Lucemyra, please click on the following link: [Lucemyra](#)

Stem Cells for Pain? Golfer Jack Nicklaus Thinks So

In a recent CNN article, golf legend Jack Nicklaus talked about his aggravating back pain that he dealt with for most of his professional career. Having tried things like cortisone injections and surgery, but still having pain, the golfer tried an approach gaining popularity using his own stem cells.

The procedure Nicklaus underwent is part of a burgeoning approach referred to as *Regenerative Medicine*. For Nicklaus, the process involved harvesting cells from his abdominal area, and after processing, injecting the cells back into his body. Nicklaus reported while he didn't feel immediate relief, he did notice the pain he used to feel while actively playing golf had subsided after a few months.

The approach, while it still has to gain FDA approval, could mean significant changes in how pain and other medical issues are treated.

To read the entire article, please click on the following link: [CNN](#)

Department Efforts

Health Initiatives for People Who Inject Drugs

The Iowa Department of Health's Bureau of HIV, STD and Hepatitis will be starting a new project to address cross-sector determinants of health impacting people who use or inject drugs. This program is supported by a new initiative from AmeriCorps VISTA to support individuals in accessing treatment or prevention services related to opioid addiction recovery. The *Health Initiatives for People Who Inject Drugs* project will be recruiting three AmeriCorps VISTA members to support programming and responsive strategic planning for individuals at heightened risk for infectious disease transmission or substance use disorders due to injection drug use. The three AmeriCorps VISTA members will support ongoing care interventions to ensure that providers and key stakeholders (e.g., law enforcement, corrections, mental health, substance use disorder treatment, and housing) around the state are equipped with tools and interventions incorporating health equity, trauma-informed care, and harm reduction.

The three AmeriCorps VISTA members – Client Engagement Specialist, Care and Prevention Support Specialist, and Systems Engagement Specialist – will collaborate closely with the Bureau's HIV and Substance Use Coordinator to research, develop, and implement a statewide steering committee addressing the intersectional needs of those directly impacted by drug use. Starting in July 2018, the team will be reaching out to stakeholders around the state to discuss planning around a variety of topics including, but not limited to: rural substance use, provider and patient education, safe disposal, heroin and opioids, methamphetamine, law enforcement and emergency services engagement, low-barrier housing, and more.

If you are interested in learning more about the three AmeriCorps VISTA positions, the Health Initiatives for People Who Inject Drugs project, or participation in the statewide steering committee, please contact Joe Caldwell, HIV and Substance Use Coordinator at joe.caldwell@idph.iowa.gov.

Upcoming Trainings

IHC Care Coordination Conference

On June 12th, the Iowa Healthcare Collaborative will be hosting the ***IHC Care Coordination Conference***. From chronic care management to behavioral health integration and combatting opioids, this conference brings together national content experts with local champions and best practice exemplars that can attest to making change happen and experiencing boots-on-the-ground improvements. Don't miss your chance to connect with fellow champions and discover opportunities for collaboration!

To learn more or register for the conference, please click on the following link: [IHC](#)

The Intersection of Opioid Abuse, Overdose, and Suicide: Understanding the Connections

SAMHSA's Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies (CAPT) and SPRC are co-hosting a webinar that will explore the connections between opioid abuse, overdose, and suicide. Presenters will examine current research on the relationship between these problems, discuss opportunities for cross-sector collaboration to address them, and feature examples from the field where this work is already underway. This webinar will take place on June 5th from 3 to 4:30 p.m. ET and is the first in a two-part series. The second webinar will explore the relationship of chronic pain to opioid abuse, overdose, and suicide, and will take place on June 28th--more details to come!

To learn more or register for the webinar, please click on the following link: [CAPT](#)