



Overview of the West Side Heroin/Opioid Task Force

Convened in 2016 by State Representative La Shawn K. Ford, IL-8, the Task Force brings together community-based agencies (CBO), governmental entities, health care providers and persons with lived experience to confront the epidemic of opioid overdoses and resultant deaths in Chicago's West Side communities.

- Goal – Stronger mental and physical health
 - Raise awareness of illegal drug use
 - Increase supportive services for persons who use drugs
 - Increase overdose response
 - Integrate mental health and substance use disorder treatment and recovery
 - Implement a coordinated collaborative for better outcomes

In July 2019, Prevention Partnership, Inc. was asked by State Rep. Ford to serve as the convening organization of the Task Force, with the charge of establishing monthly meetings, enhancing member internal and external communications, and assisting members in increasing the response to the epidemic of opioid overdose deaths occurring on the West Side.

To date:

- Regular communications to an email list of approx. 400 members/recipients (An increase of approx. 240 since July 2019). Communications include meeting announcements, resource awareness, and event announcements.
- Establishment of a Block-By-Block initiative with the goal of training at least two members on each block in how to administer naloxone. To date over 2,000 persons have received training and naloxone/Narcan from participating groups, 400 of them persons who frequent “hot spots” of opioid sales and use.
- Provided continuous media coverage for the meetings and partner events, such as the Pulaski Corridor resource weekend, West Side Community Stakeholders meetings, police district events, and Overdose Awareness Day on August 31, Overdose Prevention sites, and naloxone trainings.
- Dispensed over 1,000 drug de-activation kits to area seniors, family members and friends.
- Published an open letter in Voice Newspapers addressed to Mayor Lightfoot and then Superintendent Johnson strongly recommending that all Chicago Police Department officers working on the streets be trained on how to use naloxone and carry it with them.
- Built and maintain a continuous Social Media presence. Our current social media reach: Facebook: 1,100 followers Instagram: 114 followers, Twitter: 41 followers, 13 CAN-TV shows featuring Task Force member agencies posted to YouTube.
- Received funding from The Illinois Department of Department of Human Services, Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery (SUPR) to engage Chicago's Westside community in discussions about Overdose Prevention Sites. A news release and full report of Year 1 findings can be found at <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/OneNetLibrary/27896/documents/OPS.pdf>

For More Information about the West Side Heroin/Opioid Task Force, contact:

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