



DREXEL HOPE (HEALTH, OUTREACH, PARTNERSHIP, EMPOWERMENT)

Drexel HOPE (Health, Outreach, Partnership, Empowerment) is a multidisciplinary mobile linkage program offering medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD) for individuals struggling with opioid use disorder (OUD) with a focus on African American and Hispanic individuals. Based on opioid-related opioid overdose death data from the city of Philadelphia, Drexel HOPE has been operating in West and South Philadelphia. Drexel HOPE offers low-threshold health care at low or reduced cost to make services more accessible to underserved patients and promote health equity. (<https://drexelmedicine.org/patient-services/partnership-comprehensive-care-practice/drexel-hope/>)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This summer at Drexel HOPE, the BTG intern offered harm reduction education, including providing resources such as intranasal naloxone and fentanyl testing strips, while conducting blood pressure screenings with the mobile MOUD van as a way to destigmatize opioid use disorder in the community. Additionally, the intern:

- Created educational materials on High Blood Pressure/Hypertension and a Sodium Nutrition guide that were straight-forward and accessible.
- Completed various online trainings and webinars on topics pertaining to the treatment of those with Opioid Use Disorder (OUD), including a DEA X-Waiver training in order to be eligible to apply for a waiver to prescribe buprenorphine
- Attended weekly HOPE staff meetings and set up meetings with BTG interns at other sites to help facilitate connections and partnerships to promote Drexel HOPE's services.

PROJECT RESULTS



of BP Screenings



of intranasal Narcan distributed



of fentanyl testing strips distributed

After screening and educating people on their blood pressure, I explained the role of Drexel HOPE and how Narcan can be used when they are concerned someone may have overdosed on opioids. I educated them on the signs of an overdose, how to use Narcan, and how fentanyl present in the drug supply is contributing to the increase in overdose deaths. According to the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, there were 1,214 drug overdoses in Philadelphia in 2020 and 86% of overdose fatalities involved opioids. Fentanyl was involved in 81% of all drug overdose deaths in 2020. Also during this period, the number of ODs among non-Hispanic Black individuals increased by 29%, while the number of ODs among non-Hispanic White individuals decreased by 10%.

Of the people getting their BP checked, less than 50% were given Narcan. While some were already familiar with Narcan and had it on hand, the majority of people who refused Narcan cited that they did not use opioids nor did they know anyone who used opioids. My goal was to convey the importance of how opioid use is widespread in the community and address this stigma by saying they could come across someone who has overdosed when they are out and even on the SEPTA.

REFLECTION

My summer working with Drexel HOPE opened my eyes to the importance of educating the community about Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) in order to dispel common misperceptions. During my Storytelling Project, I learned that one of the common barriers for those with OUD to start treatment is the fear of judgement. I also came across stigma when I tried to convey to the community the value of carrying Narcan. My time with Bridging the Gaps helped me to understand how I should be an advocate for those impacted by OUD. If people could see that carrying around Narcan should be as normal and common as carrying hand sanitizer, perhaps people with OUD wouldn't be fearful of judgement when trying to get help.

Harm reduction education needs to continue to be a part of the medical school curriculum and all physicians need to be able to address substance use disorder (SUD) with their patients and should be able to prescribe MOUD (buprenorphine) regardless of what specialty they practice.

FRONT PAGES OF EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HBP)/ HYPERTENSION (HTN)

Blood Pressure Reading

120→

Systolic pressure when your heart beats

80→

Diastolic pressure when your heart is filling in between beats

Blood Pressure Ranges

| BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY | SYSTOLIC mm Hg (upper number) | | DIASTOLIC mm Hg (lower number) |
|---|-------------------------------|---------|--------------------------------|
| NORMAL | LESS THAN 120 | and | LESS THAN 80 |
| ELEVATED | 120 – 129 | and | LESS THAN 80 |
| HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 1 | 130 – 139 | or | 80 – 89 |
| HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 2 | 140 OR HIGHER | or | 90 OR HIGHER |
| HYPERTENSIVE CRISIS (consult your doctor immediately) | HIGHER THAN 180 | and /or | HIGHER THAN 120 |

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What is High Blood Pressure (HBP)?

- **High Blood Pressure (HBP)** occurs when the pressure in your blood vessels is too high.
- **Hypertension (HTN)** - a medical term for high blood pressure
 - a blood pressure reading of 130/80 or higher at least two times.
- **Signs of HTN:** silent most of the time. If you experience severe headaches, blurry vision, shortness of breath, you should seek medical attention.

Untreated High Blood Pressure can Lead to:

- Heart Disease and Heart Attack
- Stroke
- Heart Failure
- Kidney Disease

SALT (SODIUM) AND BLOOD PRESSURE

What does Salt have to do with Blood Pressure?

Salt contains **Sodium (Na)**, which is an important mineral for your body.

Too much salt can cause your body to absorb too much water into your blood, raising the amount of blood in your blood vessels.

Too much blood in your blood vessels results in high blood pressure.

You should aim to consume **no more than 1,500mg of salt per day** if you are concerned you may have High Blood Pressure (HBP).

Tips for consuming less salt:

- Eat more home-cooked meals
- Look for "low-sodium" and "no salt added" on food labels
- Use pepper and other spices instead of salt
- Taste your food before you add salt and salt it in small amounts
- When looking at premade meals, less ingredients is better

PUT IN PERSPECTIVE:

- 1 package of instant Ramen noodles contains **1,760mg sodium**
- Canned soup has an average of **700 mg sodium**
- 1 large slice of store-bought frozen pizza contains about **765mg sodium**
- 1 8-inch flour tortilla contains roughly **400mg sodium**