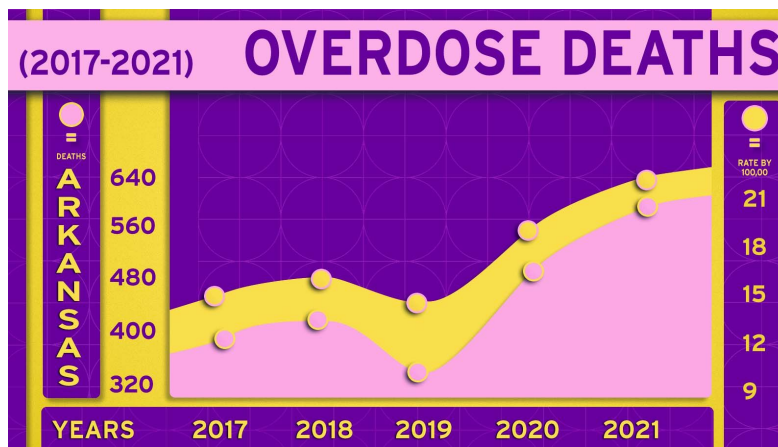




Arkansas House Newsletter

October 20, 2022

Opioid Awareness



It is estimated that 225 people die every day from a drug overdose in America. In 2020, 547 people died from a drug overdose in Arkansas.

The current opioid epidemic is one of the deadliest drug epidemics in our history.

October 26 has been proclaimed as Opioid Awareness Day in Arkansas. It is a time for communities and individuals to raise awareness and prevent new victims from falling prey to addiction.

In recent years the Arkansas General Assembly has expanded access to naloxone and created criminal and civil immunities for those who try to get help for an overdose patient.

In 2021, we passed Act 651. This act mandates the co-prescription of an opioid antagonist under certain conditions. One of the conditions includes if the patient has a history of opioid use disorder or drug overdose.

In the 2019 Session, the General Assembly passed Act 646 which provides for controlled substance overdose identification training by law enforcement officers with an emphasis on opioid overdoses. That same year,

the legislature passed Act 964 which prohibits a healthcare insurer, including the Arkansas Medicaid Program, from requiring prior authorization for medication-assisted treatment of opioid addiction.

In 2017, the General Assembly passed Act 284 which authorizes pharmacists to dispense naloxone, a medication used to reverse the effects of an opioid-induced overdose.

And in 2015, the Joshua Pauley Act became law. The law provides immunity for those calling for help for someone who is overdosing— help seekers won't be charged with possession.

Another way to prevent abuse is to encourage the safe storage and disposal of prescription drugs.

The Arkansas Drug Take Back Day is Saturday, October 29 from 10 am to 2 pm. This is an opportunity to safely dispose of expired or unused prescription drugs. There are more than 250 locations across the state. You can find the location of events and permanent drop boxes at www.artakeback.org.