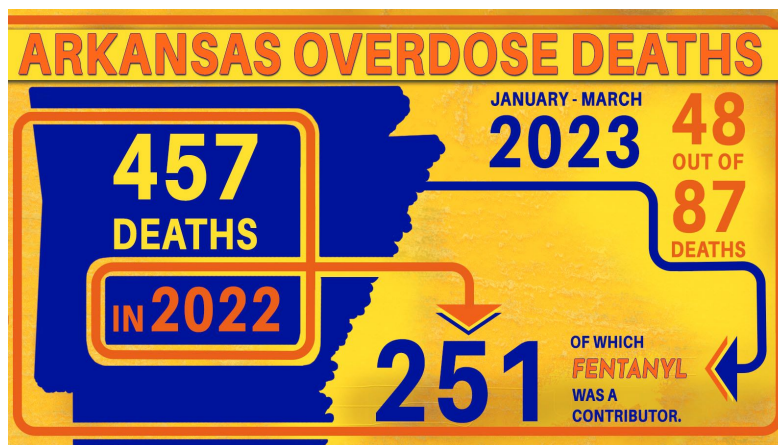




Arkansas House Newsletter

July 14, 2023

Addressing the Fentanyl Crisis



In 2022, the Arkansas State Crime Lab reported 457 drug overdose deaths. Fentanyl was a contributing factor in 251 of those deaths.

And from January to March of this year, the crime lab reported 87 drug overdose deaths. Once again, fentanyl was a contributing factor in more than half of those cases.

Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that is up to 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine. It is a major contributor to fatal and nonfatal overdoses in the U.S.

This year, the 94th General Assembly passed legislation aimed at preventing overdose deaths and legislation to hold drug traffickers accountable.

Act 584, titled the Fentanyl Enforcement and Accountability Act, creates death by delivery felony offenses, including aggravated death by delivery, death by delivery in the first degree, and death by delivery in the second degree, that apply when a person delivers or conveys fentanyl or another controlled substance that

causes the death of another person. The act provides that trafficking of fentanyl is an unclassified felony that carries a penalty of 25 to 60 years or life imprisonment and a fine of \$1,000,000. The act creates the felony offense of predatory marketing of fentanyl to minors that applies when the packaging, shape, color, or other appearance of fentanyl is created in a way that appeals to minors. The act also decriminalizes fentanyl testing strips.

Act 739 creates the offense of knowingly exposing another person to fentanyl as a Class A felony if the victim is a first responder or employee of a correctional facility and a Class B felony otherwise.

Act 811 requires that by January 1, 2024, each public high school campus have a clearly visible and labeled opioid overdose rescue kit and requires that the location of each opioid overdose rescue kit be registered with the school nurse and school resource officer of each public high school.

Overdose numbers are more than just data. Each number represents an individual who lost their future, and families, friends, and entire communities left in devastation. If you or a family member is struggling with opioid addiction you can find a list of resources available at www.artakeback.org.