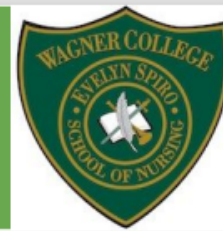




The Greatest Killer: The Opioid Epidemic in Great Kills, Staten Island



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Introduction

Many fail to acknowledge substance abuse as a major health issue that affects numerous populations worldwide. Opioid addiction has taken hold of a plethora of individuals worldwide, nationally, as well as in our own community. Great Kills in Staten Island, New York, fell subject to the cycle that is opioid addiction. The question presents itself: why is the opioid epidemic in Great Kills, Staten Island, New York, so severe, and how can it be fixed?

Community Assessment and Analysis

Demographics: "87.5% White, 0.4% African American, 1.1% Native American, 3.0% Asian, 0.0% Pacific Islander, 0.1% from other races and 8% from two or more races."

Employment: "81.59% white collar employees and 18.41% blue collar employees".



Problem in the Community



"In the late 1990s, pharmaceutical companies reassured the medical community that patients would not become addicted to prescription opioid pain relievers, and healthcare providers began to prescribe them at greater rates" (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2021). This misinformation led to extensive addiction and misuse of opioids. (4)

"In 2017, more than 47,000 Americans died as a result of an opioid overdose, including prescription opioids, heroin, and illicitly manufactured fentanyl, a powerful synthetic opioid" (4)
- The largest increase in death rates involving psychostimulants occurred in the Northeast (3)

A study was completed to examine the barriers to deprescribing, specifically in the context of medication classes and health providers' perspectives like in primary care, mental health, clinical leadership, and pharmacy. The results of the deprescribing study displayed "several barriers and facilitators to deprescribing were identified from participants' responses, in addition to several consequences of deprescribing. (2)
- Barriers resulted in three main themes: inertia, prescriber self-efficacy, and feasibility of deprescribing/tapering (1)

Examining this epidemic on a smaller scale, specifically in Great Kills, Staten Island, 2020 Epidata Brief states that Staten Island had 37.0 overdose deaths per 100,000 residents. (5)
- Adults suffering chronic pain or coping with on-the-job injuries from strenuous physical work were prescribed opioids, which led to a huge amount of opioids being available in the community (2)

This overprescription, which led to drug dependence, forced users to turn to less expensive and more available options on the street in order to maintain their high.

Proposed Solution

Health Promotion and Prevention - Outreach Programs

- The program would create free clinics, institutions, and outreach programs in public spaces to educate and assist. These outreach programs will provide spaces for those addicted, family members and healthcare professionals to have a space to help promote health.

Learning Objectives

- Clients will utilize other forms of pain control before using opioids
- Clients will help advertise the community help groups and utilize learning sessions at clinics.
- Clients will verbalize the risks and benefits of opioid use.

Goal

- To achieve beneficial outreach to everyone involved with a person struggling with addiction.

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