



Working to Reduce the Number of Opioid Prescriptions in Kentucky by One-Third by 2025

November 2020

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Kentucky Statewide Opioid Stewardship (KY SOS) November Newsletter

A Message from the KY SOS Team

KY SOS Receives Additional Funding for Program Expansion

Kentucky Statewide Opioid Stewardship (KY SOS) is excited to announce the program has received additional funding to continue the great work on opioid stewardship across Kentucky. The program will expand its efforts into the outpatient setting to meet all of the needs in the commonwealth. KY SOS will continue its efforts in the hospital setting; however, physician practices will be incorporated into the next scope of work.

KHA is thankful for the continued partnership with the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) and the Kentucky Opioid Response Efforts (KORE). KY SOS will continue to provide updates as the program continues to grow and reach patients, their families and communities across Kentucky.

Adult Services options during COVID-19

A message from Four Rivers Behavioral Health:

The Center for Adult Services has three assessment specialists ready to schedule appointments for phone or zoom. You can schedule an assessment several days out in which we can mail an intake packet to be mailed back in a pre-stamped envelope. If you need an assessment immediately, we do offer an Open Access option (Monday – Friday, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm CST) where you can come in and fill out an intake packet to turn in. The safety of our community is of the utmost importance while maintaining comfortability and providing quality services during this time. Emergency services are also always available. Please call 270-444-7132 and we would be happy to explain your options and answer any questions.

Send your community outreach program and service information to KY SOS! We would love to help spread the word in your community and across the state. Please email Claire Arant, carant@kyha.com, for newsletter highlights and additions.

Holiday Survival Guide from KY SOS Patient Advocate, Alex Elswick, PhD

Holiday Survival Guide

I know a little something about navigating addiction and recovery during the holidays. More than anything else, I know about the discomfort. I remember a stretch of probably 3 consecutive Christmases when I didn't have money to buy gifts for my family. They, of course, lovingly bought gifts for me. I felt hurt and uncomfortable in a

way that is difficult to describe.

One year, my family planned a White Elephant gifting game where everyone bought gifts for inconsequential amounts of money to be 'stolen' and exchanged. My mom must have seen the panic on my face that I couldn't buy a gift to play along, so she wrapped a gift and made it out "From: Alex." But it wasn't from Alex. I was hurt and uncomfortable then, too.

I spent the next two holiday seasons in institutions. Being in rehab for holidays had an unusual kind of sting for me. The extra preparation that went into our special holiday meals in treatment is a difficult reminder that you are here and the people you love are out there. It was hard. But as my Dad likes to say, "Yes, it's hard. But we can do hard."

I survived them. I survived them with a whole lot of support and a little bit of planning (and I may have even had some fun along the way). Here are a few tips to get you through the holiday season:

If you are actively using substances...

Safety is priority number one.

Start low, go slow, and **use sterile equipment**.

If you are using opioids, **always carry Naloxone** and do not use alone. Your life matters.

Be proactive in getting the **social support** you need. If you will not be with family this season, it's important to be with a sympathetic friend. They make you safer in more ways than one!

If you are in recovery...

Plan ahead. Think about what you'll need as you spend time with family and friends. It is always a good idea to take a friend in recovery or an ally who can keep you accountable, but more importantly, who can give you refuge when that loopy uncle has a few too many and starts talking politics!

Also, there are **practical ways to protect yourself**. For instance, I don't like to feel "stuck" in any environment away from my home. For that reason, I always make sure I park at the back of the line or in such a way that I can leave freely. That way, if I begin to feel uncomfortable for any reason, I can make my great escape to a meeting or supportive friend.

"No" is a complete sentence. Hard stop. You don't owe explanations for the ways you protect your recovery. If you don't feel comfortable stepping into any given environment this holiday season, give yourself permission to say no. That's the kind of self-love we learn to practice in recovery.

If you love someone in addiction or recovery...

Establish boundaries. Depending on your situation, it may be helpful to communicate expectations well in advance. This may mean establishing that you won't allow your loved ones to bring drugs in your home, to arrive intoxicated, etc. It may also mean establishing times in which you would like to visit with your loved ones. Setting boundaries in advance protects you and your loved ones.

Ask how you can support them. Sometimes I think family members don't ask what their loved ones need either because they assume that they know what is needed or they are afraid to rock the boat. Either way, I think it's preferable to be clear and direct in asking how to be supportive. You may be surprised at what your loved ones need from you in this time.

For all of us...Take it easy. On yourself. And on others.

Data Update

KY SOS continues to encourage all facilities to submit their monthly data into KY Quality Counts (KQC). As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, KY SOS understands resources are stretched and data entry might be delayed. Please continue to report **monthly** data on both the process and outcomes measures. Education and the future of the program are based in part on the data reported. Areas of improvement and areas of success will be highlighted and emphasized as KY SOS continues. If you need assistance with data input or navigation of the KQC data collection system, please contact **Emily Henderson** (ehenderson@kyha.com) or **Melanie Moch** (mmoch@kyha.com).

The Happenings

Upcoming Events/Webinar

KY SOS Behavioral Health webinar series will host its third webinar (in the 4 part series) on November 16, 12:00 – 1:00 PM ET. **Dr. Teresa Koeller and Dr. Mike Kalfas**, St. Elizabeth Healthcare, will present on legal topics such as X waiver education, Casey's Law, House Bill 1 and House Bill 333.

Webinar information:

<https://join.onstreammedia.com/go/41054140/kysospart3>

Password: KYSOS

Conference line: 1-877-594-8353

Participant Code: 56350822 #

Calendar invites will be sent out for this webinar soon. Please contact Emily Henderson if you have questions (ehenderson@kyha.com).

KY SOS Behavioral Health webinar series will continue with part 4, to be scheduled before the end of the year.

For more information, please visit www.kentuckysos.com or contact a KHA staff member to assist.

Emily Henderson for program and pharmacy-related questions– ehenderson@kyha.com

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Melanie Moch for data-related questions – mmoch@kyha.com

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[Claire Arant](mailto:carant@kyha.com) for administrative assistance – carant@kyha.com

Missed a webinar? All presentations are recorded and can be found under the events & education link.