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STATE OPIOID RESPONSE LAUNCHES A NEW CAMPAIGN TO COMBAT THE WORSENING OPIOID EPIDEMIC IN GEORGIA

***“It Takes a Village” Encourages Residents to Take Action in Their Homes, Schools, and
Communities***

ATLANTA — State Opioid Response (SOR) Prevention Program is empowering Georgians all across the state to be “Greater Than” the opioid epidemic affecting millions by taking part in local and at-home efforts. Together with the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD), SOR has built a village of partnerships and programs to make prevention, treatment, and recovery more accessible. They are collaborating together to help solve this crisis by showing individuals the ways they can get involved with the launch of their [“Greater Than”](#) campaign.

Opioid misuse impacts far too many in local communities. In 2019, opioid misuse led to 5,093 emergency room visits and hospitalizations and 853 Georgians died due to an opioid-involved overdose¹. And, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an increase in the number of opioid overdoses and visits to the ER in 2020². Especially during these times of isolation and hardship, SOR is urging people to call the Georgia COVID-19 Emotional Support Line at **866-399-8938** for free emotional support and confidential assistance.

“The launch of this campaign bolsters the opioid prevention and overdose prevention initiatives that we are already conducting statewide,” said Brian Le, senior program coordinator with SOR. “I hope these messages and resources will not only further our endeavors to educate Georgians on safely managing their pain, but also save many lives.”

In rural, urban, and suburban locations throughout the state, Georgians can find the information, support, and materials they need to prevent or respond to opioid misuse. First responders can request free naloxone training to learn how to reverse opioid overdoses with this life-saving drug. Students in high schools and colleges can join prevention programs such as Sources of Strength to educate their peers about the risks of opioids. Local businesses, faith-based organizations, and community services providers can host Opioid Prevention Showcase Events to spread awareness and stop stigma. Furthermore, anyone who suspects an opioid overdose can save a life and feel protected under The Good Samaritan Law, which offers various protections for all parties involved, including those who call 911 and those who receive emergency medical attention.³

“Prevention efforts are crucial to combating the rising numbers in Georgia,” said Jill Mays, director of the Office of Behavioral Health Prevention and Federal Grants. “The federal office is ramping up our efforts and programs to spread awareness to ultimately propel people to action.”

State Opioid Response has a dedicated page on their website that features educational materials, a list of support lines, and an interactive map to find services in the area. Visitors to the website can also find the following:

- The Georgia Crisis & Access Line, which offers immediate access to routine and crisis services. Anyone can call 1-800-715-4225 for confidential help and counseling 24/7.
- Georgians can also search the online map for more than 200 secure, one-way Drug Drop Boxes located all across the state to safely dispose of unused pills.
- A Resource Library that includes a collection COVID-19 toolkits and information on the risks of opioids, how to prevent the use of this drug and aid awareness.

To learn more about State Opioid Response’s initiatives, resources noted above, prevention methods, and programs available in local communities, visit [OpioidResponse.info](https://opioidresponse.info).

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State Opioid Response (SOR) is the SAMHSA-funded initiative within DBHDD's Office of Behavioral Health Prevention and Federal Grants (OBHPFG) tasked with combating Georgia's Opioid Crisis. Through its network of partners, SOR has established numerous programs and local resources all across the state. With initiatives centered around prevention, treatment, and recovery, the Prevention Program team is driving change in Georgia by educating others on how to fight the stigma, reduce the risk of misuse, and help those struggling with an opioid addiction. For free resources and access to confidential support, visit OpioidResponse.info.

¹ Office of Health Indicators for Planning, Georgia Department of Public Health. "Georgia Department of Public Health." OASIS. <http://oasis.state.ga.us/>.

² Issue brief: Reports of increases in opioid-related overdose and other concerns during COVID pandemic. *American Medical Association* (2020, August 14).

<https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/2020-08/issue-brief-increases-in-opioid-related-overdose.pdf>

³ Bruce Broadrick, Sharon Cooper, Mary Margaret Oliver, Dale Ruteledge, Ben Watson, et al. "House Bill 965." PDF file. <http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/20132014/144369.pdf>