



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 24, 2021

Services

CONTACT:

Rylan A. Chesley
Youth & Family Wellness Supervisor
Department of Behavioral Healthcare

757-393-5323

Behavioral Healthcare Services Launches Substance Use Disorder Awareness Campaign

(PORTSMOUTH, VIRGINIA) - The Department of Behavioral Healthcare Services will kick off a public awareness campaign next month dealing with mental health, opioid and other substance use disorder conditions. The campaign highlights the agency's Lock & Talk Virginia program which encourages the locking up of dangerous pharmaceuticals, and talking about issues of substance use disorder and other mental health situations. The campaign will run from April to July 2021, with the objective of raising awareness about substance abuse and prevention.

Due to COVID-19 impacts, the number of individuals overdosing has increased in the U.S. - 81,000 overdose deaths were recorded in 12 months ending in May 2020, per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In Portsmouth, from 2007-2020 there were 271 fatal opioid deaths. The CDC also stated that 40 percent of U.S. adults reported struggling with mental health or substance use disorder.

Among the campaign's tactics include two PSAs that will illustrate the ease of access, and availability of treatment for substance use disorders, and mental health concerns. A social media element will also be involved. For more information and lists of resources, call the Behavioral Healthcare Services at 757-393-5323. The links below provide additional information about the Lock and Talk Virginia program, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

<https://lockandtalk.org/>
<https://www.samhsa.gov/>