

Hosting a Watch Event or Community Conversation

"Battling Opioids, A Project of Pennsylvania Public Media," an hourlong television special produced by Pennsylvania's public media stations, will air on all stations on Thursday, September 27 at 8 p.m., and then will be available to view, along with shorter videos from each station, on BattlingOpioids.org. You can help increase awareness and reduce stigma in your area by joining or hosting a gathering where people can watch all or part of the Battling Opioids program and discuss it.

Gather a small group in your home or plan a larger event in your community. Watch the television special together, or watch some of the shorter segments available on BattlingOpioids.org. These events are yours to plan: the important thing is to bring people together to talk honestly about how the opioid crisis is affecting your community and what you can do to help.

HOW TO PLAN YOUR EVENT

Whether you are hosting a small group in your home or a large community meeting, the steps below can help you plan a successful gathering.

GET SPECIFIC

What do you want to accomplish with your watch event or community conversation? Will you host a premiere watch event on September 27, watch the 60-minute program at a later date, or choose selected clips that relate to issues happening in your community? Is there a specific group that you want to convene, or do you want to bring together different perspectives? Keep in mind that it may not be easy for some people or groups to gather for a single event. Consider dividing viewings and conversations into several shorter meetings.

- What is already happening in your neighborhood or community to fight the opioid epidemic and its causes? Can your event become part of it?

- Who will help you facilitate the conversation?
- What will the event's time, date, and location be? If you are planning a larger public event, make sure to choose a location that is comfortable and accessible. Make sure that adequate audiovisual equipment and seating is available.
- Whom will you invite? How?

CREATE AN AGENDA

Events can take many forms. Here's a sample agenda for an event featuring a screening of the 60-minute Battling Opioids program:

Welcome *(10 minutes)*

- Welcome everyone and thank them for attending.
- Make introductions (if the group is small).
- Review the event agenda.
- Share information about opioid epidemic-focused resources in your community.
- Distribute the project background and "What You Can Do" sheets.

Watch the Battling Opioids program *(60 minutes)*

Talk *(25 minutes)* Use questions like these to get the conversation started:

- What intrigued or surprised you most?
- What are the 2–3 most important issues raised in Battling Opioids?

- Which of these issues are most important for our community to address?
- How do the issues we are talking about affect you personally?
- What are the kinds of things that are keeping us from more effectively battling opioids in our community?
- Which of the things we've seen or talked about would make a difference in our community or our state?
- Now that we've talked about the issue a bit, what questions do you have about it?
- What else do we need to consider — are there voices or perspectives missing from this conversation?
- Who in our community is most affected by the opioid crisis?
- How can our community have more/better conversations about this topic?

Closing and Reception *(25 minutes)*

- Provide a brief recap of the event.
- Discuss next steps and any further meetings.
- Encourage participants to host their own watch and conversation events.
- Thank everyone for participating.
- Offer refreshments.

LET YOUR COMMUNITY KNOW

Get the word out on social media.



Send an email that asks friends to spread the word. Create a Facebook event or other shareable online listing.

If your event is public, fill out the online form on BattlingOpioids.org to make sure your event is posted there.

KEEP A RECORD OF THE EVENT

Have someone take photos and notes, and try to capture any inspiring stories. Share photos and stories on the Battling Opioids Facebook page or tag @BattlingOpioids and #PABattlingOpioids on Twitter.

THANK PARTICIPANTS

After the event, send a thank-you message to everyone who attended and share any pertinent information about resources in your community. Encourage them to follow the project on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

A PROJECT OF PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC MEDIA

BATTLING OPIOIDS

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Pennsylvania has one of the highest opioid overdose death rates in the nation. Every day, thousands of Pennsylvanians — mothers and fathers, children, neighbors — struggle to overcome addiction. Rural and urban, rich and poor, the opioid crisis affects all of us.

Neither people nor communities can fight this battle alone. Public media has the unique potential to connect Pennsylvanians across boundaries, and, in an unprecedented collaboration, it is doing just that. Our local reporting and programming have covered the opioid crisis for years — but now we are uniting to show how Pennsylvanians statewide are confronting the epidemic of heroin and prescription opioid abuse. We are increasing awareness and empathy to reduce the stigma around opioid use, aid prevention, and help people find treatment.

Pennsylvania Public Media stations WHYY (Philadelphia), WITF (Harrisburg), WLVT/PBS39 (Greater Lehigh Valley), WPSU (State College), WQED (Pittsburgh), WQLN (Northwestern Pennsylvania), and WVIA (Northeastern Pennsylvania) are collaborating to produce educational programming that focuses on the opioid crisis and its impact. Watch videos produced by each station and keep up with our reporting.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

SPREAD AWARENESS

- Participate in local conversations.
- Let your local, state, and federal elected officials know that this issue is important to you. Tell them about the extent of the opioid problem in your area.

- Share information:
 - Pennsylvania has one of the highest opioid overdose death rates in the nation, with 5,443 deaths between July 2016 and July 2017. That's more than 14 people per day.
 - In 2016, approximately 4 times as many Pennsylvanians died of opioid overdose than died in motor vehicle accidents.
 - In the first half of 2018, more than 900 babies were born with neonatal abstinence syndrome in Pennsylvania.
 - In 2016, the opioid crisis cost Pennsylvania \$53 billion in lost work, lost lives, and medical costs.
 - Pennsylvania's Get Help Now hotline, 1-800-662-HELP, received 4,520 calls in the first half of 2018.
 - In the first half of 2018, emergency medical responders provided more than 6,000 doses of naloxone to people experiencing opioid overdose.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's online guide to treating heroin and opioid addiction (www.pa.gov/guides/opioid-epidemic) is an excellent source of information about the epidemic and the local resources available.

REDUCE STIGMA

Stigma often prevents people who are addicted to heroin or prescription opioids from getting the help they need. The more everyone understands that opioid addiction is not a moral failing but a chemical dependency, the more those who struggle with addiction will realize that they are not alone and that they deserve help.

You can help be a part of the solution by increasing awareness in your community:

- Watch and share the stories available on [BattlingOpioids.org](https://www.battlingopioids.org).
- Be part of the conversation on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

HELP PREVENT OPIOID ADDICTION

- Talk to your doctor. Some people need opioids to manage their pain, yet as a patient it's important to be aware of the potential for addiction. If you are in pain, talk to your doctor about alternatives to opioid treatment and whether they will work for you. If you have had problems with opioid addiction, or other substance abuse issues, make sure your medical team knows your history.
- Dispose of medications. If you have leftover opioid medications, dispose of them safely. You may be able to use a local Prescription Drug Take-back Box Program. Some local organizations also have mobile drug take-back vans, and/or will come out to events in your area to collect unneeded medications.

SUPPORT RECOVERY

- Get to know recovery organizations in your community. They can help you support loved ones who are struggling with addiction, and give you opportunities to help others.
- Share the PA state helpline — 1-800-662-HELP — and website (www.pa.gov/guides/opioid-epidemic).

LEARN HOW TO RESPOND TO SAVE A LIFE

Learn how to administer naloxone to assist someone in distress. When given during an overdose, naloxone blocks the effects of opioids on the brain and restores breathing within two to eight minutes. You can find online training through a Pennsylvania Department of Health-approved naloxone resource site: [Get Naloxone Now](#) or [PA Virtual Training Network](#).

GET HELP

- If you or a loved one are dealing with opioid addiction, call 1-800-662-HELP (1-800-622-4357) or visit www.pa.gov/guides/opioid-epidemic to find resources and information.
- If you are having an emergency, **call 911**.
- Help in other states:

Delaware

Helpline:
800-652-2929 (New Castle County)
800-345-6785 (Kent and Sussex Counties)

New Jersey

Website: reachnj.gov
Helpline: 1-844-ReachNJ (1-844-732-2465)

Ohio

Website: mha.ohio.gov/News/-GCOAT-Opiate-Action-Team
Helpline: 1-877-275-6364

Maryland

Website: beforeitstoolate.maryland.gov
Maryland Crisis Connect
Hotline: Call 211, Press 1

New York

Website: combataddiction.ny.gov/get-help