Poll: 1 in 4 Americans Directly Impacted by Opioid Misuse; Results Prompt National Safety Council to Launch Education Campaign to Save Lives

At a provocative Memorial to victims, NSC unveils new data showing the scope of the opioid epidemic and distributes first-of-their-kind “Warn Me” labels in attempt to Stop Everyday Killers

Chicago, IL – According to a National Safety Council poll released today, one in four Americans personally knows someone who has overdosed or died from an opioid overdose, knows someone who has become addicted to opioids, or have become addicted themselves. In response to the survey results – and a recommendation from the President’s Commission for Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis – the National Safety Council is launching a provocative nationwide public education campaign that literally puts a face on the opioid epidemic. Stericycle is the Council’s exclusive disposal partner on the campaign.

Stop Everyday Killers begins with the unveiling of Prescribed to Death: A Memorial to the Victims of the Opioid Crisis in Chicago. The exhibit includes a memorial wall made of pills – carved with faces that represent the 22,000 people lost last year to prescription opioid overdose. To reduce the number of opioids in circulation, NSC has created “Opioids: Warn Me” labels for insurance and pharmacy cards. These labels are intended to prompt a critical conversation between patients and prescribers about the risks of taking opioids and possible alternatives. The survey found one in three Americans prescribed an opioid in the last three years did not realize they were taking an opioid. As part of the campaign, Stericycle is providing pre-paid Seal&Send envelopes for returning unused medications.

“The most fatally abused drug today may be sitting in your medicine cabinet,” said Deborah A.P. Hersman, president and CEO of the National Safety Council. “Fortunately, we know what we need to do to eliminate more than 20,000 preventable deaths each year, and education plays a critical role. We hope the Stop Everyday Killers campaign helps personalize this tragedy in order to save lives.”

The opioid crisis is the worst drug epidemic in recorded U.S. history. Yet despite the depth of the crisis, 40 percent of Americans are not concerned about prescription pain medication as a health and safety threat to their family – perhaps because they do not know what they are being prescribed.

Other key survey findings include:

- Just 20 percent are very confident they can spot the signs of an overdose.
- 56 percent say they can spot the signs of misuse or abuse; however, only 28 percent are very confident they would know where to go if someone close to them needed treatment.
- 63% of Americans believe opioids are very addictive, but only 43% consider fentanyl to be very addictive – even though it is significantly stronger than morphine and heroin and can cause a fatal overdose simply by inhaling it.
- Only 16 percent of those who start taking an opioid say they are concerned about addiction.
31 percent of Americans keep their prescription drugs for future use – a risky practice given many people with opioid misuse disorders get the drugs from friends or family who may not be disposing of them properly.

“Stericycle is proud to be the exclusive pharmaceutical disposal partner of the National Safety Council,” said Charles A. Alutto, President and Chief Executive Officer of Stericycle. “At its core, Stericycle is committed to helping combat the opioid epidemic with the most comprehensive pharmaceutical disposal options in the market.”

*Prescribed to Death* will travel across the country over the next few months. The Chicago location – 1714 N. Damen in the Wicker Park neighborhood – is free and open to the public every day from noon to 8 p.m. CT through November 16.

Visit [stopeverydaykillers.org](http://stopeverydaykillers.org) for information about the campaign. The “Opioids: Warn Me” labels and the Seal&Send envelopes are available at [nsc.org/stop-everyday-killers-products](http://nsc.org/stop-everyday-killers-products). For more about the Council’s prescription opioid initiative, please visit [nsc.org/rxpainkillers](http://nsc.org/rxpainkillers).

**About the National Safety Council**
The National Safety Council ([nsc.org](http://nsc.org)) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to eliminate preventable deaths at work, in homes and communities, and on the road through leadership, research, education and advocacy. Founded in 1913 and chartered by Congress, NSC advances this mission by partnering with businesses, government agencies, elected officials and the public in areas where we can make the most impact.

**About Stericycle, Inc.**
Stericycle, Inc., a U.S.-based business-to-business services company now operating in 22 countries, is focused on solutions that protect people and brands, promote health and safeguard the environment. For more information about Stericycle, please visit [www.stericycle.com](http://www.stericycle.com).

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