Sacred Heart University

From the SelectedWorks of Jessica Samuolis

January 25, 2018

Sacred Heart University Receives State Grant for Opioid Prevention on Campus

Jessica Samuolis, *Sacred Heart University*
Victoria Osborne, *Sacred Heart University*

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/jessica_samuolis/12/

Sacred Heart University Receives State Grant for Opioid Prevention on Campus

News Story: January 25, 2018

Sacred Heart University assistant professors Jessica Samuolis and Victoria Osborne-Leute have received an $11,000 grant from the Connecticut Healthy Campus Initiative to implement opioid use awareness and prevention activities on campus. Janice Kessler from SHU's Wellness Center will collaborate with Samuolis and Osborne-Leute on the project.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, opioids (including prescription opioids, heroin and fentanyl) killed more than 42,000 people in the United States in 2016, more than any year on record. Forty percent of these opioid overdose deaths involved a prescription opioid.

Closer to home, Chief State Medical Examiner James Gill revealed that 917 people died from overdoses in Connecticut in 2016, nearly a 25 percent increase from 2015.

"This project is a response to the critical and growing public health issue of opioid use," said Samuolis. "It will include a multi-disciplinary collaboration among psychology faculty, social work faculty and Wellness Center counseling staff at Sacred Heart University."

Planned initiatives include creating and disseminating printed materials to raise awareness of what opioids are, the dangers of opioid use and symptoms of addiction. The grant also supports educational programs, including "Opioid Use Prevention and Awareness Day" for faculty, staff and students on Feb. 7.

The all-day event will begin with breakfast and include tables with educational materials. Later that afternoon, in conjunction with *The Human Journey* Colloquia Series, guest speaker Sarah C. Howroyd, co-founder of the H.O.P.E. (Heroin/Opioid Prevention and Education) Initiative will address "Freedom from Opioids through Prevention, Education and Hope." An evening program will round out the event.

The grant will also fund the administration of a student survey to help quantify use, as well as a workshop for health professionals on campus March 15.

Many individuals first encounter opioids after receiving a prescription to treat pain from surgery, dental procedures or athletic injuries. "Our young athletes are potentially at risk," said Osborne-Leute. "The University is a prime source of prevention."

"There is a lot of opioid use in the corridor from Hartford to Bridgeport, and SHU is located near this corridor," said Samuolis. "Increasing education on campus about opioid addiction and

working to prevent incidence of use is critical. We must work together to start the conversation, raise awareness and make opioid abuse more top-of-mind, since this is an epidemic affecting young adults."

Work related to the grant is ongoing. For more information, visit http://www.ct.gov/dmhas/lib/dmhas/publications/STR-Colleges_Prevention_Initiative.pdf

© 2018 Sacred Heart University

http://www.sacredheart.edu/aboutshu/news/newsstories/2018/january/sacred-heart-university-receives-state-grant-for-opioid-prevention-on-campus-.html