**MEDICINE SAFE Q&A**

**What is Medicine Safe?**

Medicine Safe is a coalition of national and state public and private partners, led by the Center for Safe Internet Pharmacies and the Partnership for Drug Free Kids.

**What is the Goal of MedicineSafe?**

By aligning with public and private state organizations committed to **safety, education, communication, prevention, treatment and recovery,** we can stop losing thousands of people every year to opioid-related overdose deaths.

**What do people find when they go to the MedicineSafe website?**

MedicineSafe is the only website of its kind to provide all of the resources developed by both CSIP and the Partnership to help people learn how to:

1. safely buy medicines online CSIP’s [Verify Before You Buy](http://www.verifybeforeyoubuy.org) tool to avoid illegal pharmacy websites;
2. store and dispose of prescription medications;
3. talk to your children and other loved ones about opioids, including heroin and fentanyl;
4. recognize the signs of prescription and illicit drug misuse and abuse;
5. navigate the options and resources available for treatment and recovery, including Medicine Assisted Treatment
6. understand the laws requiring that insurance companies cover substance abuse treatment
7. access the Partnership’s 24/7 helpline where people can reach out to experts and other parents

**What about the collaboration with state coalition members?**

We’re working with a number of public and private state organizations, including the secretary of state in North Carolina and state divisions of AARP, Council of Churches and Academy of Family Physicians to determine what they are doing to deal with the opioid epidemic and what they need.

From there, we develop customized materials they can use with community organizations, healthcare professionals, schools and others to make people aware of the tools available through the MedicineSafe website.

**How are CSIP’s members participating in the MedicineSafe effort?**

Three of CSIP’s members, Google, Bing and Facebook, are donating online ads in each state where we have coalition members to raise consumer awareness about prescription opioids, heroin and fentanyl and the resources available on the website.

**Is MedicineSafe the silver bullet?**

There’s no silver bullet, but first and foremost, we must eliminate the stigma associated with addiction. Addiction is not a moral failing, it’s a disease, just like cancer, diabetes or any other chronic disease. And we can’t incarcerate our way out of the epidemic either. The federal government tried that in the 80s with their “war on drugs” and failed miserably.

To really curb the number of opioid-related deaths, it’s imperative that we give people the tools they need to understand how addiction starts, talk to their kids, recognize the signs of abuse or misuse, and safely navigate treatment, whether that means counseling, inpatient or outpatient rehab, medication assisted treatment or MAT -- or some combination of all of the above. Beyond that, we must make sure that people have the tools they need after they go through treatment to reduce the chances they will relapse.

**How else can we curtail the epidemic?**

Curtailing this deadly epidemic means acting on both the supply of opioids, heroin and fentanyl, and the demand for them. On the supply side, it means addressing the flow of heroin and fentanyl into the U.S. and our communities and continuing to stop the over-prescription of opioids without punishing people suffering from chronic pain.

On the demand side, it means raising awareness about their use among high-risk groups and developing better treatments for opioid users. The bottom line is that education, communication, prevention, access to treatment and recovery all go hand in hand.