

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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San Joaquin County Fentanyl Town Hall Meeting: October 9, 2023

Stockton, CA (October 2, 2023) – San Joaquin County Public Health Services (PHS), the San Joaquin County Opioid Safety Coalition, the San Joaquin County Office of Education (SJCOE), and the San Joaquin County District Attorney’s Office will be hosting a free fentanyl awareness town hall event on Monday, October 9, 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. The event will be held at the Wentworth Education Center located at 2707 Transworld Drive, Stockton, CA and livestreamed on SJCOE’s YouTube channel (see access links below). Dinner and dessert will be available starting at 5:30 p.m., for those attending in-person.

San Joaquin County Deputy District Attorney Cindy De Silva, San Joaquin County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Troy A. Brown, and keynote speaker Tony Hoffman will be in attendance. Tony is an author and one of the most requested mental health and substance use speakers in the country. There will also be a panel presentation that includes substance use disorder (SUD) physician Dr. David N. Araiza from Community Medical Centers and Ashlee Zarou from Central Valley California High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (CVC-HIDTA).

The town hall meeting will close with Narcan (naloxone) training and distribution. Narcan is used to reverse an opioid overdose and shown consistently to save lives if administered in time.

“The dangers of fentanyl are real, and too many young people in San Joaquin County have suffered from fentanyl overdoses,” says Dr. Troy A. Brown, San Joaquin County Superintendent of Schools. “We can make a difference if we work together, not just as organizations, but as individuals. It is important to be informed and to talk to our children about the dangers of fentanyl and drug use.”

San Joaquin County Deputy District Attorney Cindy De Silva points out that, “The District Attorney’s Office is embarking on a robust public information campaign to educate our county’s youth regarding the dangers of illicit drugs, particularly fentanyl, thanks to funding from our Board of Supervisors, which believes strongly in this mission.”

De Silva notes that, “Parents should be aware of small, round and blue pills stamped with an ‘M’ on one side and a ‘30’ on the other, which is the form illicit fentanyl often takes, although fentanyl powder can be present in other substances or different types of pills as well. These pills are often known on the streets as ‘oxies’ or ‘percs’ but in fact contain no oxycodone or Percocet, but instead contain illicitly produced fentanyl.”

Rachel Zerbo, Public Health Educator with the San Joaquin County Opioid Safety Coalition, states that, “Last year’s town hall was well-attended by parents and students and personalized how crucial the fight against illicit fentanyl is, focusing on the role we can all play in keeping young people in our community safe from overdose. The event led to a sharp increase in distribution of Narcan, the opioid overdose reversal drug, and dozens of requests for opioid safety training in the community.”

Zerbo adds, “The most important thing we can do is continue to share with everyone, especially with our teens and young adults, that fentanyl is deadly even in small quantities, and it’s impossible to know if the drugs you’re being offered are tainted with it. Even casual experimentation with any drugs not prescribed to you can have fatal consequences. It’s also so important for people who are experiencing problematic drug use to know that they’re not alone and help is available.”

RSVP is highly encouraged at www.bit.ly/FentanylTownHall23.

For opioid screening & resources, including Narcan, visit: www.SJCOpioidSafety.org or phone (209) 953-7309.

Keynote speaker Tony Hoffman’s website: www.tonyhoffmanspeaking.com

Watch the livestream event on the San Joaquin County Office of Education’s YouTube channel here: <https://bit.ly/3Q44GW5> or https://www.youtube.com/live/JFbSlrV0_M?si=KaNAB48hSA_GeMpx

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