

**Letter to the editor**

Last year, New Jersey and the nation took great strides in the fight against the opioid epidemic. Overdose deaths in the United States fell by 27 percent from 2023. There are many factors that contributed to this encouraging progress, including the role of everyday citizens becoming more educated about the risks of prescription opioids and their link to fentanyl.

On October 6, New Jersey residents will have the opportunity to continue this mission of education and progress during Knock Out Opioid Abuse Day. This annual event, now in its 10th year, is dedicated to raising awareness and educating the public about the dangers of opioid misuse.

Throughout October, New Jerseyans can learn about and share crucial information regarding the risks of prescribed opioids, their links to heroin use, and the growing threat of synthetic opioids like fentanyl. While 2024 represented a major step forward with a nearly 36 percent drop in drug overdose deaths, more than 1,800 New Jersey resident sided of an overdose. There is still much work to be done.

Knock Out Opioid Abuse Day features a robust online presence, with events hosted on social media platforms and partner organization websites. The Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey’s Knock Out Opioid Abuse Day Learning Series offers valuable resources to help understand and address this epidemic. Additionally, many organizations will provide educational materials at community events throughout the state.

This initiative is a collaborative effort by the Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey, the Governor’s Council on Substance Use Disorder, the New Jersey Department of Human Services’ Division of Addiction Services, and the Community Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Morris.

We all have a role to play in preventing opioid abuse and supporting affected individuals and families. By participating in Knock Out Opioid Abuse Day, you can be part of the solution. Join us on October 6 and help make a difference.

Visit [knockoutday.drugfreenj.org](http://knockoutday.drugfreenj.org/) for more information and to sign up to participate.