

DOSE OF REALITY IN NEBRASKA

Nebraskans are fortunate to live in a state where they know their neighbors and care about their communities. Oftentimes, our stories and experiences are found to be interwoven. A frequently repeated concept is people are only separated by six degrees. Living in Nebraska for a period of time, one perceives the separation to be only two degrees--or three at most. It is a short distance that separates us from one another and provides the source for deep concern we share when we learn of circumstances needing our attention. It is this knowledge and caring that brings us to respond when we have been asked where we can serve.

Every day the headlines across America proclaim the affliction of the opioid and prescription drug crisis. Searching the news we read stories of lives lost, children left orphaned, and broken families.

Common prescription drugs, like oxycodone, hydrocodone and fentanyl can be very effective in addressing pain, but for some they have led to a tragic addiction.

We see the headlines and stories and we are determined and committed to steering our state away from the devastation of statistics which translate into real lives being destroyed or lost. We want to lift our neighbors and help them change course away from the addiction and abuse that can ravage their health, relationships, and futures.

In Nebraska, every three days someone dies of an overdose. How many lives will get our attention? Do the numbers need to be significant to make an impact to move us to action?

The definitive answer is "no". Any life lost to this torment is lamentable. Nebraskans regard life and the dignity and value of each life.

Recognizing this, last fall, several agencies hosted the Nebraska Opioid Summit at UNMC to confront this problem with determination in pursuing solutions and collaborating across disciplines to hold back the scourge that so many other states have experienced. The outcomes of the Summit are ongoing, active, and stemming from the areas of prevention, law enforcement and treatment.

This week, through the generosity and commitment of many, we are launching the **Dose of Reality** campaign. This prevention campaign is a direct outgrowth of the Summit, and an expressed effort joining together many who are committed to its successful impact on our state.

The Nebraska Broadcasters and the Nebraska Press Association have both partnered to raise awareness and carry the message of prevention to citizens of Nebraska, which is a key step in preventing prescription drug abuse and protecting against hospital admissions and deaths from overdose.

The Nebraska Medical Association, Nebraska Pharmacy Association, Nebraska Hospital Association, CoalitionRX, and Nebraska MEDS Coalition, have also pledged to spread the news and raise awareness, which is the first defense against this desolation. This joint endeavor will magnify this critical message.

In the coming months, it is my hope that this collaboration of the **Dose of Reality** reaches across our state, that the message is heard and the understanding of prescription and opioid damage leads to

the prevention of harm.

Nebraskans have the privilege of knowing one another and demonstrating tangible care for one another. We can find the shortest path between us. This strength can be harnessed in pulling together to spread the word of prevention.

To learn more visit: <https://doseofreality.nebraska.gov>

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