

**Fentanyl use in Wyoming**

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The state of Wyoming is a beautiful state with a strong sense of community. However, in recent years a growing issue has been challenging this community. This issue is fentanyl.

Fentanyl is a synthetic drug that is used as a painkiller. This drug is similar to morphine but is much more potent, making it easy to overdose on. The increasing use of fentanyl in Wyoming is extremely dangerous and must be resolved, so what can we do about it?

According to the Oil City News article “Fentanyl problem still growing in Wyoming”, “Between 2018 and 2021, the number of deaths caused by man-made opioids like fentanyl increased from 10 to 42 in Wyoming, according to the Wyoming Vital Statistics Service.” (para. 3). This is a three hundred and twenty percent increase in deaths caused by drugs in only three years. Furthermore, Oil City news also states that, “the Wyoming Division of Criminal Investigation seized about 1,600 ‘dosage units’ of fentanyl in 2020 compared to nearly 13,500 in just the first three quarters of 2022.” The rapid increase in this drug could lead to the deaths of many more Wyoming citizens in upcoming years. This is why it is so important that the citizens of Wyoming work together to help resolve this issue.

The first thing that the people of Wyoming can do to help is to become informed on the issue. Understanding the problem at hand is the best way to find solutions. By educating the citizens of Wyoming on the dangers of drug use, it can reduce the usage of illegal drugs. Teaching students in schools about the impact of drugs is a great way to inform young people to make safe decisions. Information in schools should become more accessible and frequent to help battle increased fentanyl use. This could be done with slideshow presentations, flyers, and even social media posts, complete with help line numbers and other resources. Having meetings in the

workplace could be effective to help spread awareness. Advertisements on billboards or online are a good way to connect to as many people as possible and should be utilized as well.

Another aspect of fighting fentanyl usage in Wyoming is making sure citizens are prepared with the resources to help themselves or others when in a dangerous situation. According to “Casper feels increased presence of fentanyl impacting Wyoming”, an article written by Wyoming news now, “ Wyoming Recovery, an addiction treatment center in Casper, has seen more people using its services to recover from fentanyl. The center can help up to 15 people through an inpatient program. Currently, there are 13 patients using the service, seven of them are overcoming fentanyl addictions” (para. 3). Addiction treatment facilities are a very valuable resource when battling a drug problem like the one Wyoming is currently facing. Making sure the people are aware of addiction facilities and hospitals near them is essential in the case of an emergency. Something else that every Wyoming home and establishment should have is an emergency overdose kit. These kits predominantly use naloxone, more commonly known as narcan. Naloxone is a narcotic that can be used to reduce an opioid overdose in emergency situations. Narcan kits are fast acting and safe for all ages. Having one could mean the difference between life or death in an emergency situation. The safety of Wyoming citizens is a big concern, especially with drugs like fentanyl being used more and more frequently. Having resources like treatment centers and overdose kits help people feel at ease, and provide safe options in dangerous situations.

As fentanyl use continues to increase, Wyoming needs to be informed on the issue, as well as know what to do in difficult situations. We can inform people on this issue through school and work establishments. Safety can be increased by having emergency kits ready to use.

If the government and citizens of Wyoming work together to keep people safe and informed, fentanyl use can be significantly reduced and ensure a better future for the State of Wyoming.

### **Works Cited**

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