



ST. JOSEPH COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

St. Joseph County Department of Health

"Promoting physical and mental health and facilitating the prevention of disease, injury and disability for all St. Joseph County residents"

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St. Joseph County Department of Health Partners with 525 Foundation to Expand Drug Disposal Program

The St. Joseph County Department of Health has received a grant award, one of eight in the country, from the Institute for Intergovernmental Research on behalf of the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance. The award will expand the 525 Foundation's *Drop2Stop* drug disposal program. The St. Joseph County Department of Health will partner with the 525 Foundation to install five permanent pill drop boxes in the county, implement additional drug "take-back" events, and expand the Foundation's Prevention Plus program; an on-demand home delivery service available to any person in St. Joseph County in need of an at-home prescription drug disposal pouch. The total award amount is \$99,925.

The 525 Foundation's *Drop2Stop* program features specially designed, secure boxes that allow people to properly dispose of expired or unneeded prescription drugs. Currently 13 permanent pill drop boxes exist in St. Joseph County. Access to permanent pill drop boxes for disposal of unneeded medication is critical in addressing the opioid epidemic. This best practice approach for drug disposal will ensure lives are saved and not lost to potential overdose.

The last week of August, August 28-September 3, 2022, has been declared Overdose Awareness Week and brings national attention to the ongoing opioid epidemic. In 2021, St. Joseph County lost 97 lives to overdose; the most deaths our community has ever reported. As the overdose epidemic has evolved, we have seen the amount of overdose deaths increase due to illicitly manufactured fentanyl.

On **Tuesday, August 30, from 11:30-1 p.m.** the 525 Foundation, in partnership with the St. Joseph County Department of Health, will sponsor a community conversation on the dangers of fentanyl. This free learning event will take place at the St. Joseph County Public Library Community Center in Ballroom A. Registration is available at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/lets-chat-about-fentanyl-tickets-399690092827>.

For more information on the overdose epidemic, please visit the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention at www.cdc.gov/opioids. For more information on the 525 Foundation, visit www.525foundation.org.

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