

CONTACT

Hannah Kiefer
Director of Communication
Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites
hkiefer@indianamuseum.org
(317) 234-8146



Indiana State Museum to open exhibit on opioid crisis

INDIANAPOLIS (*Oct. 30, 2019*) – The United States is in the middle of a crisis that is impacting our families and communities, with Indiana at the epicenter: opioid use disorder.

This February, the Indiana State Museum plans to talk about it.

A new exhibit that has been in the works for more than two years – “FIX: Heartbreak and Hope Inside Our Opioid Crisis” – will be at the museum from Feb. 1, 2020, through Feb. 7, 2021. Working with more than 50 community partners from around the state, the exhibit will explore the many faces of this crisis that affects all Hoosiers.

“Substance use impacts our family, friends and neighbors. That’s why continuing to help more people enter recovery will always remain a top priority,” said Gov. Eric J. Holcomb. “The more we know about the ways it affects people, the better equipped we’ll be to avoid dependence or support someone you love.”

FIX invites visitors to unravel the crisis one step at a time, including the science and biology behind opioid use disorder, our nation’s history with other health crises, personal stories from individuals affected and an area focused on what recovery can look like. Through authentic and trustworthy information, interactive artwork and personal stories, the exhibit will work to build empathy and reduce stigma surrounding opioid use disorder.

“Gov. Holcomb has placed significant resources behind attacking the drug crisis,” said Jim McClelland, Indiana’s executive director for drug prevention, treatment and enforcement. “While there are signs of progress, there’s more ground to cover. This exhibit will inform youth and adults regarding substance use and empower them with the knowledge that there’s hope and healing is achievable.”

FIX is not only an exhibit for adults; it’s an exhibit also designed to engage youth ages nine and older. The exhibit aims to get information and understanding into the hands of these younger visitors with the hope of creating a more informed and strong community.

Hands-on interactives will allow families to explore the real science behind cravings or addictions, and video kiosks will share the real stories from Hoosiers personally affected by the crisis, from varying perspectives. Visitors can go inside a giant fabric brain to learn about how opioids affect the brain and explore a quilt fort created by local artist and person in recovery himself, Philip Campbell. Photos taken just for the exhibit by Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer Bill Foley will show what recovery can look like around the state.

At the end of the experience, visitors will find resources about the topic, so that they know where to get help or where to look if they would like to help find solutions themselves.

“We want our visitors to walk away with the sense that they know more, understand more, and can empathize with people – just like them – who are suffering from opioid use disorder,” said Cathy Ferree, president and CEO of the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites. “It is a disease, and understanding that allows us all to move forward.”

Along with the exhibit, programming addressing the crisis will take place at the museum in downtown Indianapolis and the 11 historic sites statewide, from panel discussions to town hall-style meetings. The programming will extend beyond the run of the exhibit, for as long as the communities see a need for them.

“We cannot hide from the numbers that show the depth of the addiction problem in our state,” said Chief Justice Loretta H. Rush, who also serves as co-chair of the National Judicial Opioid Task Force. “We must face them with courage and consider the humanity behind the numbers. The devastating addiction statistics are real people: our family members, our colleagues, our neighbors and our friends.”

A media preview day is planned for Jan. 31. More information will be available in early January. Please contact Hannah Kiefer at hkiefer@indianamuseum.org or 317-234-8146 for more details or to schedule an interview.

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