



California Narcotic Officers' Association

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Sheriff Jeff Leikauf
El Dorado County Sheriff's Office
200 Industrial Drive
Placerville, CA 95667

Dear Sheriff Leikauf

As you know, the California Narcotic Officers' Association was founded in 1964 as a means of training law enforcement officers and prosecutors on the dangers of drug use, abuse, and sales. This platform has been further developed to provide information to the public, as well as educate our legislatures in an effort to make sound decisions. Today, CNOA has over 6,500 members throughout California, other states, and even foreign countries. We rely on our professional associates for additional information and innovative ways to help curb drug use.

After reviewing information provided through the Sierra Reduction Harm Coalition's web site and comparing it to the California Overdose Surveillance Dashboard, I have found that the number of overdose deaths in El Dorado County from 2019 to 2022 increased by over 300%. The originating year of the Sierra Reduction Harm program in El Dorado County, there were 34 overdose death. In the third quarter of 2022, the overdose deaths escalated to 103. ¹

Although needle exchange programs are sometimes credited for reducing the number of transmittable diseases, I found that the Well Dorado Program, whose web site is funded by the Public Health Division of the Health and Human Services Agency, documented four deaths from HIV/AIDS in the year 2022. This number has fluctuated from 2-4 individuals per year since 2013. ² So, it doesn't appear that this program is reducing the number of cases stemming from HIV/AIDS.

To parallel this concept, the greatest number of overdose deaths in El Dorado County involved opioids. Although fentanyl is available in powder form and often mixed with other drugs, the most common form of Fentanyl is currently in pill form and not injected. ³ Thus a needle exchange is likely to be outside the scope of fentanyl use.

According to the U.S. Department of Human Health Services, *preventing* substance use disorder is the first step towards addressing overdoses. Whereas harm reduction is keeping people who use drugs alive so that when they are ready, high-quality treatment must be available without delay. ⁴

Based on the HHS formula, we need to first discourage people from using drugs, and then have appropriate treatment available for them when they desire the change. I would argue that identifying the core issue driving the drug use/abuse, is also a major factor. I would also suggest that the Sierra Reduction Harm program is not saving lives but simply perpetuating the use of poisonous and illegal drugs.

In conclusion, the money expended in this harm reduction program might be better spent on mental health and drug prevention/rehabilitation services.

Respectfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ed Pecis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter "E" being particularly large and stylized.

Ed Pecis
CNOA 2023 President

¹ <https://skylab.cdph.ca.gov/ODdash/?tab=CTY>

² <https://www.well dorado.org/indicators/index/view?indicatorId=8503&localeId=246#:~:text=The%20Centers%20for%20Disease%20Control%20and%20Prevention%20estimates,More...%20County%3A%20El%20Dorado%202.1%20deaths%2F%20100%2C000%20population>

³ <https://www.dea.gov/resources/facts-about-fentanyl>

⁴ <https://www.hhs.gov/overdose-prevention/recovery-support>