



## Knox County Health Department

140 Dameron Avenue, Knoxville, TN 37917

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### **KCHD's Service Spotlight: Substance Misuse Response Work**

*This week's spotlight highlights KCHD's All4Knox and Harm Reduction Teams*

*Knoxville, Tenn.* – Substance misuse in Knox County continues to be an issue of great importance, impacting those who live, work and travel to the area. KCHD's substance misuse prevention work is focused in two areas: All4Knox and harm reduction.

During the pandemic, KCHD's work to address substance misuse continued with the release of the three-year All4Knox [communitywide strategic plan](#) in October 2020 as well as the release of the [summary report](#), which covered the multi-partner efforts from March 2020 – March 2021. Additionally, KCHD collaborated with partners to help facilitate All4Knox's virtual events, which include two strategic plan sessions and two webinars discussing practical solutions for your workforce: *Addressing Substance Misuse In The Workplace* and *Staying Safe, Staying Connected: Recovery During A Pandemic*.

"Collaboration is key to addressing systemic, communitywide issues such as the substance misuse epidemic, and the strategic plan and the summary report reflect many of the outcomes we can achieve when we work together," said KCHD's Senior Director and Public Health Officer Dr. Martha Buchanan. "Just like most disasters, the pandemic, and especially the length of it, has exacerbated this issue, which is why this collaborative work is so important."

In addition to releasing the County's first communitywide strategic plan to address substance misuse in 2020, KCHD All4Knox team members, with the support from County and City leadership and multiple community members and organizations, continue to work together to address this devastating epidemic. KCHD is facilitating six implementation teams who are working to advance the strategic plan. All community members are welcome to join the initiative and participate in any regular meetings or activities. More information is available here: [All4Knox.org](http://All4Knox.org)

One of the early success stories from the All4Knox work was the identified need for an Overdose Fatality Review (OFR) Team whose main goal is to use aggregate data from overdose fatalities to identify system gaps, coordination issues, or identify other needs that should be addressed to help get upstream and ultimately prevent future overdoses. As a result, with the support of a federal grant provided through the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, KCHD hired a health educator to coordinate the county's first OFR Team. This is a multidisciplinary team of experts from the fields of substance use, harm reduction, treatment, public safety, and other community members who volunteer their time.





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Along with dedicated staff to support All4Knox, KCHD's harm reduction team offers linkage to care services for persons at-risk from the consequences of substance misuse and communicable disease. This team's goal is to provide support and education and to prevent the spread of diseases often associated with substance misuse with a focus on underserved minority populations.

Additionally, KCHD has a new Harm Reduction Navigator, as of late 2020, who can offer linkage to care and education for those at-risk from the consequences of substance misuse. Any Knox County resident 18 years or older who could benefit from additional support due to alcohol or drug use can contact KCHD's Curtis Davis at 865-228-0511 or [Curtis.davis@knoxcounty.org](mailto:Curtis.davis@knoxcounty.org).

In line with the communitywide strategic plan, the next steps for both KCHD's All4Knox and harm reduction teams are to continue to convene partners, hold events, and provide education and outreach to reduce stigma around substance misuse, increase engagement and coordination within and among sectors, and enhance how information is shared for coordination of efforts.

All4Knox is a collaboration of Knox County and the City of Knoxville with facilitation and coordination support from Metro Drug Coalition and the Knox County Health Department. The All4Knox facilitation, coordination, and support staff are employees of KCHD.

### **About Knox County Health Department**

The first health department in Tennessee to achieve national voluntary accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board, the Knox County Health Department (KCHD) is dedicated to ensuring the conditions in which every resident can be healthy. As a chief health strategist for the community and with more than 240 team members, KCHD's broad scope of work includes convening partners to improve community health, identifying community health threats, investigating disease outbreaks, conducting extensive outreach and education, preparing for public health emergencies, providing and connecting the public with medical care, enforcing food safety and air quality laws, and more. For more information, visit [www.knoxcounty.org/health](http://www.knoxcounty.org/health).

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