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TO: MPCSD Parents and Guardians
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Naloxone (Narcan) in Schools

Opioid abuse continues to be a problem in communities throughout California, and San Mateo County is no exception. Fentanyl and most recently Rainbow Fentanyl abuse is on the rise. Rainbow fentanyl is a brightly colored fentanyl that can be found in many forms, including pills, powder, and blocks that can resemble sidewalk chalk or candy. Counterfeit pills, obtained on the street or online, can also contain deadly doses of fentanyl. They are made to resemble other prescription medications, such as OxyContin, Percocet, Vicodin, Xanax, or Adderall.

Fentanyl is extremely potent, and it takes only a very small dose, 2 milligrams – about the size of a few grains of sand – to be lethal. You can't taste see or smell it. It is up to 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine. Unfortunately, drugs laced with fentanyl are widely available on the street and online, and people often don't know they are taking fentanyl or how much fentanyl a drug contains.

The key message here is that any pill (regardless of its color, shape, or size) that does not come from a healthcare provider or pharmacist can contain fentanyl and be deadly.

Fentanyl-related overdose deaths among teens ages 15 to 19 increased by 300 percent between early 2020 and the first half of 2021. This age group has the second-highest rate of emergency department visits for fentanyl-related overdoses when compared with all other age groups, according to the most recent data available.

We share this information as it is critical that we understand what our youth may be up against and talk with them about the dangers of fentanyl and ingesting any medication not prescribed to them by their doctor.

While prevention and awareness are by far our best strategies for protecting our youth, we are also preparing in case an overdose occurs on our school campus. We are partnering with the San Mateo County Office of Education to ensure we have Naloxone Hydrochloride (also referred to as Narcan) on campus and adults trained on how to administer it. Naloxone is an opiate antidote that will be administered if an opioid-related overdose is suspected. It can help restore breathing within minutes, giving enough time for first responders to arrive. Naloxone is not a controlled substance, cannot be abused, and has very few side effects.

We will continue to do all we can to help make our students aware of the dangers of recreational drug use. However, we turn to you for support reiterating these messages at home. Again, please talk to

your children about the dangers of drugs. Some helpful resources are included at the end of this letter to help with those conversations.

Resources

What Every Parent and Caregiver Needs to Know About FAKE PILLS, US Drug Enforcement Administration

The Facts about Fentanyl, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention **Overdose Prevention**

Initiative - Fentanyl, California Department of Public Health **How Naloxone Saves Lives in**

Opioid Overdose, National Institutes of Health **Recognizing Opioid Overdose**, National Harm Reduction Coalition