information iFargo
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Spring 2017

The Mayors' Blue Ribbon Commission on Addiction

According to the American Society of Addiction Medicine, drug overdose is the leading cause of accidental death in the U.S., with 52,404 lethal drug overdoses in 2015. Opioid addiction is driving this epidemic with 20,101 overdose deaths related to prescription pain relievers, and 12,990 overdose deaths related to heroin in 2015. In Cass County, the Coroner's Office reported 46 deaths from 2012-2015 because of prescription pain relievers and heroin. In 2016, there were 14 deaths January through July.

The Mayors' Blue Ribbon Commission on Addiction is a local initiative responding to the opioid crisis and the larger issue of addiction in our community. With support from the Dakota Medical Foundation, mayors from Fargo, West Fargo, Horace, Moorhead and Dilworth launched the effort on September 26. In addition to Fargo City Mayor Tim Mahoney, several city departments are involved in the effort.

The core purpose of the commission is to mobilize the community to take back what addiction is stealing. The five-year vision is a strong and healthy community, free from the burden of addiction.

The commission consists of a steering committee, a planning and coordination team, three expert panels and project teams. The steering committee includes champions and ambassadors of the commission who provide expertise and accountability to guide the strategic efforts of the commission.

The planning and coordination team is responsible for providing strategy leadership, management and operations coordination for the commission.

The expert panels provide expertise, awareness of community resources and innovative solutions. They carry out focused action plans to meet measurable goals. There are three panels to address different aspects of drug abuse. They include prevention, early intervention, and treatment and recovery. The prevention panel helps people throughout the community prevent disease and maximize wellness. The vision of the panel is an informed community investing in a culture of addiction prevention. The early intervention panel helps persons at risk improve health through easily accessible, targeted interventions. The panel's vision is a community where people know whom to call. The treatment and recovery panel helps people with substance abuse disorders effectively manage their recovery and wellness. Their vision is a community moving toward no deaths, less incarcerations and people effectively managing their recovery. Project teams were recently formed to work on implementing specific strategies as identified in the commission's emerging strategic recommendations.

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Blue Ribbon (continued)

The commission released emerging strategic recommendations in December. This included six overarching themes that apply to all three expert panels' priorities:

Framing the problem through data, clear messaging and community readiness.

Reprioritizing funding & reimbursement to grow and sustain programming with proven outcomes.

Fully integrate with healthcare providers.

Build the capacity of organizations to innovate and produce results.

Leverage technology to improve collaboration, awareness, education and access to care.

Improve social capital by moving away from a punitive focus and helping people develop networks of connectedness.

The prevention panel recommended strategies including parent and family-based programs, child/student social capital building, worksite/employee wellness programs, a community-wide public awareness campaign and reducing prescription drug misuse.

The early intervention panel recommended strategies including a clearinghouse of available services and resources, transportation, navigators to help people navigate the system, transitional services to provide safe and sober housing and resources, and implementing or enhancing harm reduction strategies.

The treatment and recovery panel's recommended strategies included medical detox, medication assisted treatment, housing, partnership building, insurance reform and community-based services.

From these strategic recommendations, the planning and coordination team selected four priorities to focus on first. They included a public awareness campaign, a clearinghouse and navigators, medical detox and housing. Soon the project teams will begin working on proposals to implement these priority strategies.

To learn more about the Mayors' Blue Ribbon Commission on Addiction, you can contact Fargo Cass Public Health's substance abuse prevention coordinator at 701.241.1341.

Encouraging infant-friendly worksites

Fargo Cass Public Health encourages businesses to support their breastfeeding employees by becoming recognized as a designated infant-friendly worksite.

Several area businesses are already designated as Infant-Friendly worksites, including the following: The City of Fargo, City of West Fargo, Discovery Benefits, Eide Bailly LLP, Elim Care Center, Fargo Jet Center, Gate City Bank, Hornbacher's, Lillestol Research LLC, ManorCare Health Services, North Dakota State University, Preference Employment Solutions, Sundog, TMI Hospitality, Town & Country Credit Union, Tronsgard & Sullivan Dental, Weather Modification Inc., West Acres Shopping Center Mall and the YMCA Early Learning Center South.

For help in achieving desired employee support outcomes or to learn more about becoming a designated Infant Friendly worksite., contact Michelle Draxten with Fargo Cass Public Health at 701.476.6677 or mdraxten@cityoffargo.com.

April is Sexually Transmitted Disease Awareness Month

The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates 20 million new STD infections occur each year in the United States.

The Fargo Cass Public Health Clinic offers STD testing, counseling and treatment.

Rapid HIV and Hepatitis C tests are also available. Fees are based on household size and income.

To schedule an appointment or for more information, call 701.241.1383. Walk-ins are welcome.

Would you like to join the City of Fargo organization?

Find current job openings at www.FargoND.gov or via Twitter @ CityofFargoHR

Household Hazardous Waste Facility is open year-round

Household hazardous waste includes items labeled danger, toxic, poisonous, corrosive or flammable such as paints, thinners, stains, varnish, drain and oven cleaners, poisons, automotive fluids, weed and insect killer, fluorescent light bulbs and ballasts, etc. These materials (in household quantities), among others, are accepted at the City's permanent Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facility, which is located at 606 43 1/2 St. N. in Fargo. The facility is just east of the landfill and compost site, on the south side of 7th Avenue. Fargo residents can bring household hazardous waste to our facility year-round at no charge during regular business hours.

The HHW facility also accepts one computer set (tower, monitor and accessories), as well as one television per resident per month.

The City of Fargo does not pick-up electronics or household hazardous waste products during Cleanup Week.

Year-round facility hours are as follows:

Mondays and Tuesdays - 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Wednesdays - 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Thursdays and Fridays - 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Second Saturdays of each month - 8 a.m. to noon.

Businesses can call 701.281.8915 to schedule an appointment to drop off waste at the facility.

Yard waste disposal information

Yard waste will not be collected from May 8 to October 30. All yard waste (including grass, leaves, garden trimmings, excess fruits and vegetables) must be taken by the resident to a recycling center or composted in your backyard. At the recycling centers, large green containers are available for the yard waste and small containers are available for bags and boxes that are used to haul the waste. If you have any questions, residents are encouraged to call 701.241.1449.

Brush is collected by the Forestry Department from May 1 through October 31. For information, residents may call 701.241.1465.

Holiday garbage collections

On Good Friday (the week of April 10), garbage and recycling collections will operate according to normal schedules. The Sanitary Landfill will be open on Friday, April 14.

On Memorial Day (the week of May 29), Monday garbage and recycling collections will occur on Tuesday; the remainder of the week will operate according to normal schedules. The Sanitary Landfill will be closed on Monday, May 29.

The metro's Spring Cleanup Week in quickly approaching

The metro's annual Cleanup Week will be held May 1-5, 2017. This annual event cleans up our cities by giving residents an opportunity to dispose of tires, appliances and other large items at no charge on their regular garbage collection day. More information is available at www.CleanupWeek.com.

This collection applies to residential homes only and items need to be placed on the boulevard by 7 a.m. on your scheduled garbage day. Residents should place garbage in disposable containers, except for oversized items. When preparing items for disposal, be sure to separate the items into groups (for example, furniture, household garbage, brush, etc.) because items are collected in separate trucks. No building material or concrete is allowed and there is a limit of two appliances per household.

Household hazardous waste products, such as paint, varnish and chemicals, will not be collected during Cleanup Week and should be taken to the HHW facility.

Electronics, such as TVs and computers, will not be collected. These items should be taken to the HHW facility or to the Electronics Recycling Event. The Electronics Recycling Event will be from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, April 29, at the Solid Waste Facility, 2301 8th Ave. N. Residents may bring computers, televisions, monitors and other residential electronics and recycle them for free. Two items per resident will be accepted and proof of residency is required.

All in one recycling

The City of Fargo is introducing ALL in ONE recycling in July 2017. ALL in ONE recycling allows residents to deposit all of their recycling in ONE BIN. No more separating, it's never BIN easier!

For more information or, if you choose to opt out of the program, call 701.476.4087.

The cost will be $3.00 per month and ALL in ONE recycling replaces the current sorted curbside blue bin collection. Residents participating will have a 96-gallon recycling container delivered to their home in June 2017. Collection will remain the same with recycling picked up every other week on your garbage day. Recycling drop off sites will remain available for those choosing to transport recycling themselves. Current acceptable recyclable material guidelines will remain the same.

FROM THE POLICE STATION

It is no surprise that parents play a key role in preventing our youth from using illegal substances.

How can you help keep your child from making a poor decision leading down a dark path?

Create an open environment that promotes communication. By offering supportive behavior and being aware of what is happening in your child's life, you may be able to catch the red flags early. Ask questions, listen, observe and maintain control of your emotions.

Encouraging your child often enables your child to be confident in themselves and the decisions they are capable of making. Help your child break down a problem into smaller parts and encourage them to think outside the box to find a solution.

Negotiate solutions with your child. Working together to solve problems helps improve cooperation and teaches them valuable skills they can use in their adult lives.

Show that you care by defining safe boundaries. Make your rules clear and simple to follow.

Have a list of consequences and be ready to hold true to those consequences when your child behaves outside the boundaries set for them.

Be involved in your child's life by monitoring their behavior. Regularly monitoring their behavior will help you recognize problems that are developing and promotes safety. Communicate with your child's friend's parents and their teachers.

Know your child's friends. Know who their friends are, where they live and what type of activities your child will engage in with their friends.

Anyone can become addicted to opiates or any illegal substance. There is no "typical" user and each user looks different from the next. Most parents say, "not my child" but it could be your child.

What are the warning signs?

Missing pills from prescription bottles in the home. If you're prescribed opiate pain killers you should be extra vigilant about storing them out of the reach of children and teens.

Behavioral changes, such as diminished interest in school, extracurricular activities and friends and mood changes or emotional instability.

Indifference or even sleepiness.

Constant requests for money with nothing to show for it.

Needle marks or unseasonable long-sleeved shirts to cover them up. Keep in mind users may use other areas to inject a drug such as their feet, ankles and inner thighs.

Change in personal appearance, such as poor hygiene, red, flushed cheeks or face.

Health issues such as frequent nosebleeds, runny nose not caused by allergies or a cold, frequent sickness, sores or spots around the mouth, nausea, seizures, vomiting, sudden or dramatic weight loss or gain, headaches or sweatiness.

What do you do if you notice one or more of these warning signs?

Get help as soon as possible. Reach out to your child's primary caregiver or local addiction counseling facilities.

For more information on opiate use, abuse and local resources for help, visit www.fargopolice.com.

FROM THE FIREHOUSE

Each year, men, women, and children are killed in home fires caused by cigarettes & other smoking materials. These fires can affect not only the smoker, but others living in or next to the house or apartment at the time of the fire. Annually, these fires cause the loss of life and millions of dollars in property damage.

Put It Out, All the Way, Every Time.

Pinch it, before you pitch it. Whether in an ashtray, or at a smoking station, always make sure your butts are cool to the touch before discarding.

Smoke outside in "designated" areas.

Never use a plastic container for butts. Use deep, sturdy ashtrays placed away from anything that can burn.

Never extinguish directly in trash or upon vegetation. Discard smoking materials in approved non-combustible receptacles.

Use a metal can filled with sand, not planters or pots containing potting soil & peat moss.

Soak cigarette butts and ashes in water before placing them in the trash.

Fully extinguish all smoking materials every time! There are no truly "Fire Safe" cigarettes.

Never smoke near medical oxygen; it can intensify fire, making fires burn hotter and faster.

Home improvement funding available through Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative

With springtime arriving, the City of Fargo's Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative (NRI) program is in full swing.

The program offers a low interest rate of 2.59% APR, and there has never been a better time to take advantage of a great opportunity to do some home renovation.

Loan amounts can range from $10,000 to $75,000. To be eligible for the NRI program, the home must be at least 40 years old, have an assessed value of $250,000 or less and be located within Fargo city limits.

The NRI program has an application deadline of June 1, 2017. For more information and application forms, visit www.cityoffargo.com/NRI.

BIKE FM announces Spring bike safety classes

BIKE FM (Bicycle Information, Knowledge and Education of Fargo-Moorhead) will host four bicycle safety classes in April through Moorhead Community Education. The first three classes, "Bike Basics for All," will be 90 minutes in length and cover the basics of what you need to know to get back on your bike and be comfortable on the road and trail, including the rules of the road, best practices, biking laws and a discussion of the barriers to riding. Each of the three sessions will also feature a special topic: Fix-A-Flat, Riding at Night or Commuting. A bicycle is not needed to participate in the classroom session; however, an optional group ride will follow for those who are interested.

The final class, Traffic Skills 101, is a 9-hour multi-day cycling safety training that consists of both classroom and on-bike education. It is designed to give participants the skills and confidence they need to ride safely and legally in traffic or on the trail. The course is recommended for ages 16 and older, and students should bring a properly functioning bicycle and a helmet.

All classes will be taught by local league cycling instructors certified by the League of American Bicyclists. The Bike Basics for All courses will be from 6:30 to 8 p.m. April 6, 10 and 20 at the Probstfield Center for Education, 2410 14th St. S., Moorhead. Cost is $14, or $9 for Moorhead School District residents.

The Traffic Skills 101 course will run April 28 from 6 to 9 p.m. and April 29 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Probstfield Center for Education. Cost is $54, or $49 for Moorhead School District residents.

For more information or to register, visit www.moorheadschools.org/schools/alternative-schools/community-education.

BIKE FM is a network of local individuals and organizations interested in creating more opportunities for bicycle education in the community. It includes representatives from PartnerSHIP 4 Health, Great Rides, Moorhead Community Education, FM Metro COG, North Dakota Active Transportation Alliance, Moorhead Police Department, Fargo Parking Commission and more.

The City of Fargo receives EPA Brownfields grant

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awarded the City of Fargo $400,000 in Brownfields grant funds to conduct environmental assessments and identify cleanup needs at several properties targeted for redevelopment and reuse potential.

"EPA Brownfields grants continue to help North Dakota communities transform blighted properties into assets," said EPA Regional Administrator Shaun McGrath. "EPA is proud to be part of Fargo's efforts to address environmental contamination and create new amenities and business opportunities."

The City of Fargo will use the EPA Brownfields funds to assess sites in areas identified as priorities for revitalization, including the Main Street Corridor and the Downtown/Red River Corridor. The City has documented at least 36 sites of potential environmental concern, which include current or former handlers of hazardous waste, known petroleum or hazardous substance spill incident sites and sites with current or former underground storage tanks in the two target areas. Frequent Red River flooding has also made areas of the flood damaged downtown area and land bordering the Red River into potential brownfields as flood waters deposited sediment laden with petroleum, agricultural chemicals and debris.

For more information, contact Derrick LaPoint at 701.241.1474 or planning@cityoffargo.com.

Downtown employer-purchased MATBUS passes now available

MATBUS and Downtown Fargo have joined together to offer discounted passes to downtown employers in Fargo and Moorhead for MATBUS 30-day passes. The pilot program allows downtown employers to purchase passes for their employees at a discounted rate to incentivize employees to try transit as an alternative to driving and parking in the downtown areas. For information, just visit www.matbus.com or chat with a MATBUS team member at 701.241.8140.

It's a Peep-O-Rama! Peeps workshop for kids

Kids ages 5 to 12 are invited to join us at the Main Library for a Peeps® diorama-making event. Bring a shoe box or boot box and some theme ideas. The event is Sunday, April 2, starting at 2 p.m. at the downtown Main Library.

All sorts of craft supplies and Peeps (quantities are limited) will be available to create an interesting diorama. Participants are also welcome to enter their creations in the Peeps Diorama Contest taking place the following week. Space is limited; pre-registration is required. Register online, or contact the Children's Department at 701.241.1495 for further information.

Library to host Peeps diorama contest for kids

Peeps lovers in preschool through grade 6 are in for a treat as we host our first ever Peeps Diorama Contest for Kids. Create a diorama in a shoe box using one or more of the gooey marshmallow desserts as characters in a scene. Diorama themes must be based on something you can check out at the Fargo Public Library (ex. books, movies, music, etc.).

Bring your creation to the Children's Room at the Main Library anytime between Monday, April 3 and Saturday, April 8. Dioramas will be on display during National Library Week, April 9–15. During this time, ballots will be available for voting at the Main Library. Voting will be by popular choice in three different age groups. Winners will be announced on Tuesday, April 18, and prizes will be awarded.

For additional rules, guidelines and entry forms, visit the library's website or stop by any Fargo Public Library location.

Carlson Library hosts series of acoustic concerts

The Fargo Public Library will host two free acoustic concerts this spring at the Carlson Library titled 'Sunday Unplugged: a series of tiny concerts at Carlson.'

Residents are invited to join us for an intimate listening room experience featuring the talents of local solo musicians. The concerts are suitable for all ages. Both concerts start at 2 p.m. in the Community Room of the Carlson Library and are scheduled for Sunday, April 2 and Sunday, May 7.

For more information, call 701.241.1492 or visit www.fargolibrary.org.

Fargo Public Library

Library offers storytime series "Kindergarten Success!"

The Library is offering the free, storytime series "Kindergarten Success!" designed to help youngsters get ready for school. In these sessions, families will enjoy activities designed to encourage the development of early literacy skills. Participants will enjoy music, stories, art and play. Families will receive free materials developed by the American Library Association to continue the learning and fun at home. This series is open to children ages 3 to 5 and their caregivers. Registration is not required and all materials will be provided. All start times are 10 a.m. and the dates and session topics are as follows:

Saturday, March 25 – You'll Sing, I'll Sing!
Saturday, April 22 – Do You See What I See?
Saturday, May 27 – Make It Count!

Annual gardening workshop held in May

Get your green thumb ready for spring and summer with a four-part series of informational and hands-on gardening sessions at the library. These 60-minute workshops will be held at the downtown Main Library starting Tuesday, May 2. Other dates in the series are May 9, 16 and 23, and all sessions start at 7 p.m. Topics for the gardening sessions will be announced. One thing to note is the ever-popular "Blossom Barter" session is set for Tuesday, May 23, at 7 p.m. This is an opportunity to share your love of gardening with your neighbors. Participants are asked to bring healthy, leftover, divided or sprouted bedding plants to exchange with others. For details on these workshops, contact the Main Library Information Desk at 701.241.1492.

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ECRWSS
RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER

Lower your energy bills and help Fargo win a $5m prize!

Today:
Change 5 most-used light bulbs to LED. If you buy 2700K LEDs, the light color is similar to incandescent bulbs. They use 70-80% less energy and last 25X longer!

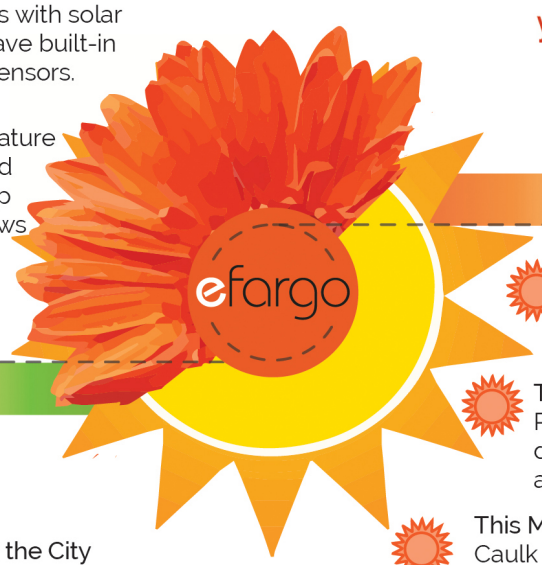
This Week:
Start washing your clothes in cold water & if possible use a clothesline or drying rack in your yard, home or apartment.

This Month:
Replace outdoor lights with solar powered lights that have built-in motion and daylight sensors.

This Spring Season
Set your thermostat temperature higher than usual (suggested 75°-82°F). Or better yet, keep cool by opening your windows or using a fan!

Things to do this
Spring

Fargo is currently ranked #3 in the Georgetown University Energy Prize competition. The community needs your help to get to the #1 ranking!



Things to do this
Summer

Today:
Power off your electronic devices (smart phones, computers, etc.) when not in use.

This Week:
Purchase power strips to connect multiple devices and small appliances together allowing easy and convenient power on & off.

This Month:
Caulk and weatherize your windows and doors. It helps keep cool air inside if the air-conditioning is running.

This Summer Season:
Install shades or blinds. Close them during the day in the summer to prevent over-heating your home. Open them in the evening.

efargo is a partnership between the City of Fargo, North Dakota State University, Cass County Electric Cooperative and Xcel Energy. This effort is partially funded by the State Energy Program, Department Of Commerce, North Dakota.

For more tips & information head to: efargo.org