

Drug Overdose Prevention Task Force Holds Series Of Presentations

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Tricia Stouch (left) and Chelsey Price (right). Credit: Cherri Gregg

By Cherri Gregg

PHILADELPHIA (CBS) - Pennsylvania's first chapter of NOPE is holding a series of presentations for students and parents in Delaware County beginning today. They're hoping to curb the rising number of drug overdoses in the area.

"In 2011 in Delaware County, we've seen more than 60 deaths leading to heroin overdoses. And since then that number has risen," says Chelsey Price, who works for Holcomb Behavior Health and is a member of the Delaware County Narcotics Overdose Prevention Education Task Force. NOPE began in Florida and was brought to Pennsylvania last year.

"Prevention is a huge focus," says Price, "we have to get the message across to these children early before they start to use."

Price says young people start by using prescription drugs in high school and continue into college. When the habit gets too expensive, many times they go for harder drugs.

"She began using prescription pills in her senior year of high school," says Tricia Stouch, of her daughter Pamela, "from the pills, she began using heroin because it is cheaper."

Stouch's daughter died of a heroin overdose four years ago and she's funneled her grief into preventing drug abuse before it starts.

"I wanted to get to the children," she says, "I want people to know that any medication that is an opioid is addictive."

Stouch, who is on the Delaware County Heroin Taskforce, was instrumental in bringing NOPE to Pennsylvania. The organization gives prevention and overdose education messages to middle school and high school age children and their parents. NOPE hold educational presentations about

the seizures, hallucinations and confusions that are signs of an overdose so that they can call 911 before it's too late.

"It's important to be the hero and tell someone if you know someone who's using drugs," says Price, noting that "Be The Hero" is just one of the messages they share with young people.

"We talk about the danger of combining drugs," she says, "a lot of the NOPE task force members that can no longer speak for themselves because of the combination of drugs and alcohol."

Today at 9am, NOPE will hold a presentation at Chichester Middle School. They'll present to Chichester High School students on Thursday morning at 7:45 and 9am and then to the parents later in the evening. Price says she's hoping to expand the task force to the entire state.

"If you have consistent messages and can get everyone in middle and high schools onboard, it would speak measures," says Price.

For more info on the Delaware Valley NOPE Task Force, go to <http://www.nopetaskforce.org/chapter-delco.php>