

Awareness Dates 2016

Mark Your Calendar!

“Awareness” days, weeks, and months provide a great opportunity for you to ride the coat-tails of a national campaign. The media will already be tuned into your cause, so it should be easier to garner coverage of your work. To capitalize on these opportunities, you may want to plan a public event or contact a reporter to pitch them on what your coalition is working on or has accomplished. ***Send your event information to calendar editors or your pitch to news journalists no fewer than 10 business days before the observance of the awareness date.***

Use these opportunities spread information about the prevalence of the epidemic, risk factors for opioid misuse, and solutions that can improve individual and community health.

These are also good opportunities to circulate your messages and get people talking about your issue on social media. By investing focused effort on social media in connection with these events, you will likely get greater engagement among your followers, garner new followers, and increase your website traffic.

January

[National Drug & Alcohol Facts Week for Teens](#) – January 25-31, 2016

National Drug & Alcohol Facts Week is a national health observance for teens to promote local events that use science to shatter the myths about drugs. **Possible opportunity to engage teens and parents in your work.**

March

[California Prescription Drug Abuse Awareness Month](#) – March 1-31, 2016

Sponsored by the National Coalition Against Prescription Drug Abuse, this event that has been slowly gaining traction over the last couple years. There is no central sponsoring organization, but the link above provides an example of the types of activities people have planned in the past.

[Patient Safety Awareness Week](#) – March 13-19, 2016

Sponsored by the National Patient Safety Foundation, the theme for 2016 is “United in Safety.” Everyone in the health care process plays a role in delivering safe care. By uniting together in that common goal, we can make a difference in patient safety. The focus of this campaign is patient engagement and emphasizes the importance of the relationship between providers and patients and their families. Enhanced communication begins with an informed and engaged patient and helps to lead to safer care.

[Brain Awareness Week](#) – March 16-27, 2016

Sponsored by the Dana Foundation, this global campaign seeks to increase public awareness of the progress and benefits of brain research. **Neurology has contributed fresh insights into the biology of pain and addiction – consider using this opportunity to educate the public about the effects of pain and opioids on brain chemistry.**

[National Poison Prevention Week](#) – March 20-26, 2016

Sponsored by the American Association of Poison Control Centers, this week seeks to raise awareness about the dangers of poisonings and how to prevent them.

April

[Alcohol Awareness Month](#) – April 1-30, 2016

Sponsored by the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Alcohol Awareness Month provides a focused opportunity across America to increase awareness and understanding of alcoholism, its causes, effective treatment and recovery. It is an opportunity to decrease stigma and misunderstandings in order to dismantle the barriers to treatment and recovery, and thus, make seeking help more readily available to those who suffer from this disease. **Possible opportunity to remind the public not to mix alcohol with opioids.**

[National Minority Health Month](#) – April 1-30, 2016

Sponsored by the DHHS Office of Minority Health, this month-long campaign is dedicated to advancing health equity across the country, on behalf of all racial and ethnic minorities. **Possible opportunity to reaffirm your commitment to eliminate health disparities and achieve health equity.**

[National Public Health Week](#) – April 4-10, 2016

Sponsored by the American Public Health Association, this is an opportunity to share simple steps to help Americans improve their health and the health of their community.

[World Health Day](#) – April 7, 2016

The focus of World Health Day 2016 is diabetes, but since this is such a large campaign, there may be an opportunity to leverage your communications.

[National Alcohol Screening Day](#) – April 7, 2016

Sponsored by Screening for Mental Health, Inc., this outreach, education, and screening day raises awareness about harmful and dependent drinking behaviors and connects at-risk individuals with treatment options. Colleges, community-based organizations, and military facilities sponsor public screening for problem alcohol use.

[Earth Day](#) – April 22, 2016

Earth Day generates successful environmental campaigns that focus on issues ranging climate change and drinking water to voter registration and pollution. Earth Day gives you an opportunity to partner with the environmental community, who are likely interested in reducing the pollution that results when people flush their medications.

[The National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day](#) – April 30, 2016

Sponsored by the US Department of Justice, this day aims to provide a safe, convenient, and responsible means of disposing of prescription drugs, while also educating the public about the potential for abuse of medications.

May

[Mental Health Month](#) – May 1-31, 2016

For over 65 years, Mental Health America and its affiliates across the country have led the observance of Mental Health Month by reaching millions of people through the media, events, and screenings. **Spreading the word about the importance of mental health relates to opioids because the abuse of drugs may cause people to experience one or more symptoms of mental illness and existing mental illnesses can lead to drug abuse.**

[Children's Mental Health Awareness Week](#) – May 1-7, 2016

The campaign seeks to raise awareness about the importance of children's mental health and that positive mental health is essential to a child's healthy development from birth.

[National Prevention Week](#) – May 15-21, 2016

Sponsored by SAMHSA, National Prevention Week is an annual health observance dedicated to increasing public awareness of, and action around, mental and/or substance use disorders. Community events are encouraged – there is an opportunity to guide each site in outreaching to their local population.

[North American Occupational Safety and Health Week](#) – May 8-14, 2016

Sponsored by the American Society of Safety Engineers, the North American Occupational Safety and Health Week is intended to raise awareness about occupational safety, health and the environment. **Possible opportunity to leverage work done by the National Safety Council (nsc.org) – a nonprofit organization whose mission is to save lives by preventing injuries and deaths at work, in homes and communities – regarding [opioid safety and the workplace](#) e.g. <http://www.cnbc.com/2015/12/15/>**

[National Alcohol- and Other Drug-Related Birth Defects Awareness Week](#) – May 8-14, 2016

Sponsored by the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, this observance week serves to educate people, especially women, about the dangers of consuming alcohol and using drugs during pregnancy. **Possible opportunity to engage OBGYNs in your work.**

[National Neuropathy Awareness Week](#) – May 8-14, 2016

Sponsored by the Foundation for Peripheral Neuropathy, this week is dedicated to neuropathy – the leading cause of disability in the US and one of the most common chronic neurological diseases. **Good opportunity to communicate about pain management.**

June

[National Safety Month](#) – June 1-30, 2016

Sponsored by the National Safety Council (NSC), National Safety Month focuses on reducing leading causes of injury and death at work, on the road and in our homes and communities. **Leverage NSC work regarding [opioid safety and the workplace](#) and [prescription overdose](#)**

[National Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Awareness Day](#) - June 27, 2016

In order to bring greater awareness to the issue of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), the United States Senate designated June 27 as National PTSD Awareness Day. In addition, June has been designated as PTSD Awareness Month by the National Center for PTSD (NCPTSD). There is a particular focus on veterans as well as children.

July

[National Minority Mental Health Month](#) – July 1-31, 2016

Sponsored by the DHHS Office of Minority Health, this month-long campaign takes on the challenges of mental health conditions, health coverage and the stigma of mental illness. In many communities these problems are increased by less access to care, cultural stigma and lower quality care. *Possible opportunity to tailor communications specifically to minority populations in your community.

August

[National Health Center Week](#) – August 7-13, 2016

America's Health Centers, including community, migrant, homeless and public housing health centers, provide access to affordable, high quality, cost effective health care to medically vulnerable and underserved people throughout the United States. **Possible opportunity to engage clinics in your work.**

[International Overdose Awareness Day](#) – August 31, 2016

International Overdose Awareness Day (IOAD) is an initiative of [Penington Institute](#). This international event held on August 31 each year and aims to raise awareness of overdose and reduce the stigma of a drug-related death. It also acknowledges the grief felt by families and friends remembering those who have met with death or permanent injury as a result of drug overdose.

September

[National Recovery Month](#) – September 1-30, 2016

Sponsored by SAMHSA, Recovery Month seeks to increase awareness and understanding of mental and substance use issues and celebrate the people who recover.

[Pain Awareness Month](#) – September 1-30, 2016

Sponsored by the American Chronic Pain Association, Pain Awareness Month is a time when various organizations work to raise public awareness of issues in the area of pain and pain management.

[National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month](#) – September 1-30, 2016

Sponsored by National Alliance on Mental Illness, this awareness month helps promote resources and awareness around the issues of suicide prevention, how you can help others and how to talk about suicide without increasing the risk of harm.

[FedUp! Rally](#) – September 18, 2016

FED UP! Coalition exists to create one voice calling for an end to the epidemic of drug addiction and overdose deaths attributed to opioids and other prescription drugs. The FedUp! Rally includes a march to the White House.

October

[Medicine Abuse Awareness Month](#) – October 1-31, 2016

Sponsored by the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA), National Medicine Abuse Awareness Month is an annual campaign to raise awareness of the dangers of abusing of prescription and over-the-counter medicines and solutions to this problem. A cornerstone of the campaign is the CADCA 50 Challenge, an initiative designed to challenge coalitions to help us get medicine abuse on the radar screens of parents and others.

[National Physical Therapy Month](#) – October 1-31, 2016

National Physical Therapy Month is hosted by the American Physical Therapy Association each October to recognize how physical therapists and physical therapist assistants help transform society by restoring and improving motion in people's lives.

[Mental Illness Awareness Week](#) – October 2-8, 2016

Sponsored by the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the event focuses on fighting stigma, providing support, educating the public and advocating for equal care. In 2015 the theme was "Stigma Free."

[National Depression Screening Day](#) – October 6, 2016

This day is comprised of awareness events that include an optional screening component.

[World Mental Health Day](#) – October 10, 2016

The objective of World Mental Health Day is to raise awareness of mental health issues around the world and mobilizing efforts in support of mental health. The Day provides an opportunity for all stakeholders working on mental health issues to talk about their work, and what more needs to be done to make mental health care a reality for people worldwide.

[National Healthcare Quality Week](#) – October 17-22, 2016

Sponsored by National Association for Healthcare Quality, this week recognizes the influence that health care quality professionals have in healthcare delivery systems and their impact on positive patient outcomes.

[National Health Education Week](#) – October 17-22, 2016

Sponsored by the Society for Public Health Education, this week focuses national attention on a major public health issue and promotes understanding of the role of health education in promoting the public's health.