

Free Webinar

Overdose: The Pandemic within a Pandemic



Moderator: Silvia Ayon, Key Populations Programs Manager



Allan Ragi, ED, KANCO



Hon. Wamuchomba,
MamaCare Kiambu
County



Dr. Katende, EAC



John Ryan: CEO,
Overdose Advocacy
Day



Helgar Musyoki:
NASCOP



John Kimani, ED,
KENPUD

Date: 31st August 2020; Time: (10-11.30 AM)

Register here <https://bit.ly/2XA6WIP>

Weekly Newsletter

September 2020, Issue 1

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Marking the international Overdose Awareness Day

To mark the International Overdose Awareness Day (IOAD), marked annually on the 31st of August, KANCO hosted a webinar that drew panelist from across the globe and across different cadres to share and deliberate on the way forward for overdose under the theme **‘Overdose: The Pandemic within a Pandemic’**

Sharing on the KANCO experience, in harm reduction, Allan Ragi, Executive Director, KANCO, stated that we have come a long way in harm reduction saying “*Government leadership is key in building confidence in the services and we have continually appreciated the leadership of government in the harm reduction movement.*” He urged the stakeholders present to carry on with the leadership in harm reduction saying ‘*We can overcome overdose, we should not let anyone die from overdose.*’ He challenged on the need to use the resources available prudently while seeing what quick wins can be leveraged to achieve the harm reduction objectives. He impressed on the need to adopt and replicate progressive laws such as the Good Samaritan law, and the EAC Alcohol, Drugs and Substance use policy as well as avail the commodities needed including naloxone.

Hon. Gathoni Wamuchomba, Member of Parliament, Kiambu County and also the founder Mamacare Initiative that offers alcohol and drug use treatment and rehabilitation services in Kiambu County, sharing on the role of leadership observed; ‘*Overdose is a scary word that is often associated with death, yet denial of the alcohol and drug use problem remains rife from both the community and the leadership, impeding the right responses. She observed that Community challenges including alcohol and drug use related challenges must have community based solutions and therefore stakeholders must strive for holistic community solutions to drug use challenges*’

Representing the Community, Mr. John Kimani Director, Kenya Network of People Who Use Drugs,(KENPUD) shared on the experiences of communities in accessing naloxone saying “*Naloxone should be made available within the reach of PWUDs, be supplied with reasonable durability to help curb overdose related mortalities. We also need to be trained on the use of Naloxone, to help us save our brothers and sisters*’

Sharing on the Global perspectives, John Ryan, Convenor, International Overdose Day and CEO, Penington Institute Australia, noted ‘*Intoxication dates back and should be addressed while safeguarding human dignity as emphasized in harm reduction, by not dreaming that we can eliminate drug use rather how we can treat each other with respect and through a public health response.*’

Speaking on the key populations programming in Kenya, Helgar

High HIV prevalence and new infections occur among key populations^{3,4,5}



New HIV Infections by Population

20.3% Casual heterosexual sex	14.1% Sex workers and Clients
2.5% Health Facility Related	3.0% People Who Inject Drugs
44.1% Heterosexual sex within union	15.2% MSM and Prison

33% of the new HIV infections occur in key populations

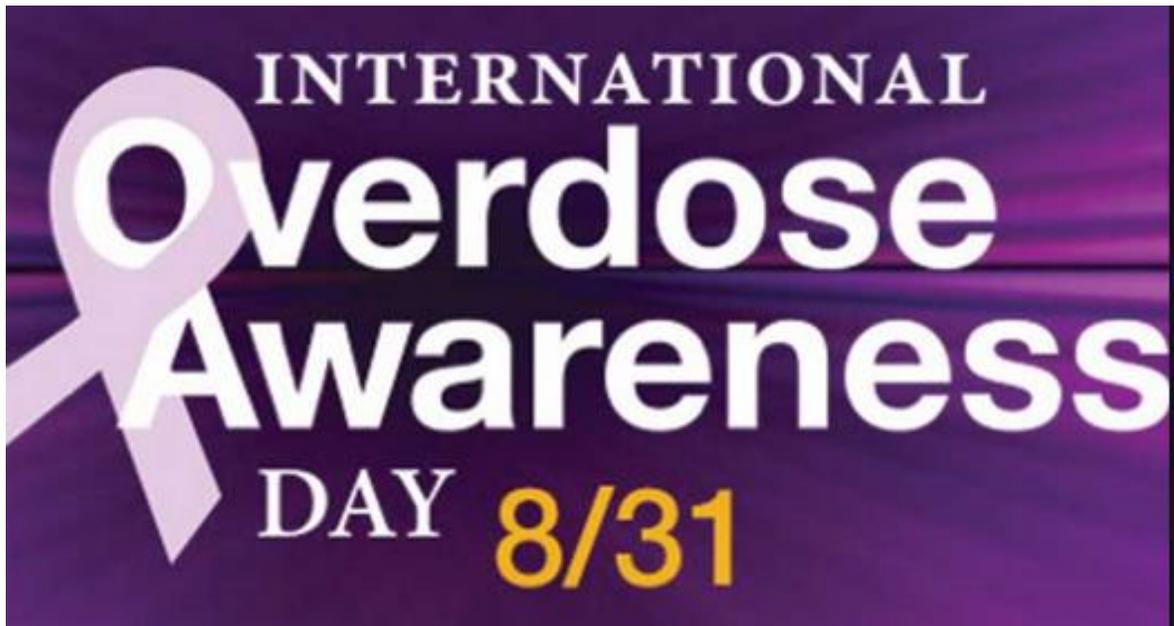
Musyoki Head Prevention Unit & Key populations Program

Manager NASCOP, noted that Naloxone is still disallowed for community distribution under current Public health laws citing the need for continuous advocacy to ease access as well as for resources to ensure consistent supply. She recommended the need to review the laws and regulations consultatively with the stakeholders, Engagement of the parliament and the judiciary to fast track review of laws to support harm reduction including Overdose Management and procurement of naloxone spray as well as engagement with EAC through the EAC drug policy to catalyse harm reduction interventions including pooled procurements for some commodities such as Naloxone

Sharing on the current policies and frameworks on harm reduction, Dr. Michael Katnde EAC, observed that the regional policy gives clear high level guidance on managing harm reduction, however noting that being a new policy it needs support for its adoption and implementation at all levels. He called on the need for continued technical and financial resources to implement the policy. He called on the need for continued advocacy for adoption and implementation of the regional policy by the Partner States and building partnership with the EAC Secretariat to for continued monitoring of the illicit alcohol, drugs and other substances, Strengthen Knowledge management and experience sharing platforms and Develop a comprehensive and integrated M&E and Learning framework. He also pointed on the need to strengthen research to inform policy and practice

In the closing remarks the partners expressed interested for continued collaboration harm reduction towards achieving the shared goals/

Community Voices on the International Overdose Awareness Day



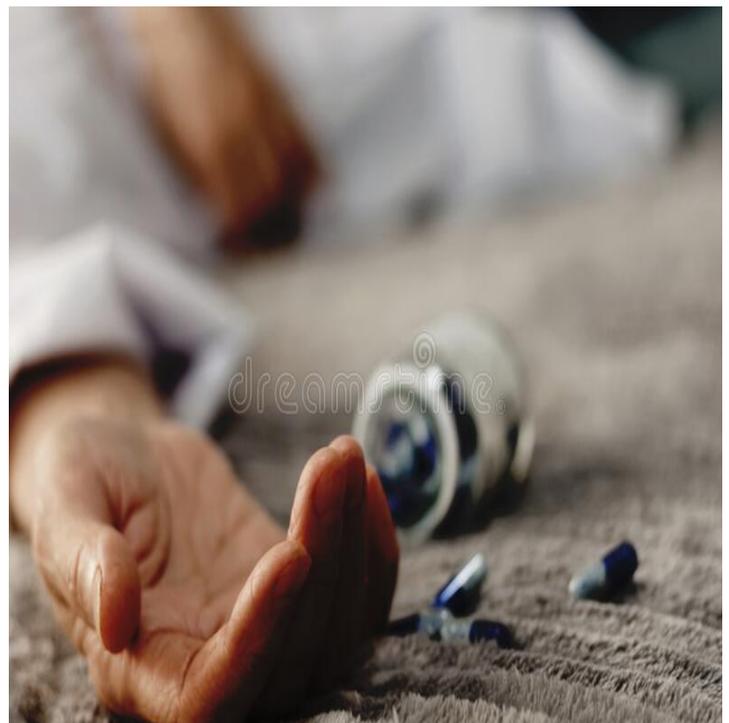
On the International Overdose Awareness day, KANCO organized a community’s feedback and dialogue forum, as a follow-up event for the webinar themed *overdose: The pandemic* to discuss matters overdose and decide on the way forward.

The PWUD community raised concerns over the general shortage of naloxone and the criminalization of its possession by the the community saying it creates pockets of missed opportunities to save lives.

‘We have seen many deaths that we could have prevented and its really scary’ a community member shared

The communities also shared that the overdose problem is more rampant among men who use drugs compared to women, most of them being on medically assisted therapy but also using other drugs and substances. They pointed on the need for continued advocacy to ensure that naloxone is availed to the communities. They also asked the government to decriminalize the possession of naloxone by community members, asking that instead members should be trained on how to administer it, as most of the overdoses take place far from the health facilities.

Representing KANCO in the session, the Key Programs Manager, Ms. Sylvia Ayon observed “No one should die from overdose’ impressing on the need for continued advocacy to ensure accessibility of naloxone



THE COVID-19 VIRTUAL CONFERENCE



Photo Courtesy: H.E Uhuru Kenyatta Making remarks during the conference

On the 31 of August, President Uhuru Kenyatta lead a COVID-19 virtual conference themed '**County government resilience in the Covid 19 Era: building sustainability for the future**'. The Conference brought together stakeholders including the council of governors, government agencies and non-state actors including KANCO to reflect on the country response to the pandemic and explore ways to build a sustainable future as the government executes a recovery plan.

It also provided a platform to share on the counties developments in the fight against coronavirus whose rate of infection in the country now averages eight per cent.

Addressing the meeting H.E the president Kenyatta expressed his condolences to the families that's have lost loved ones to the pandemic. He further acknowledged the people who have been in the forefront in the fight against the pandemic, saying that tough calls had to be made including invoking the Public Health Act, as containment measures that would significantly affect the enjoyment of various liberties, rights, and freedoms of our people.

He suggested a framework for 'banking' the last six months

experiences in this conference, reflecting on what has been handled, the COVID-19 crisis six months after it became manifest, looking at the forecasting of the spread of the virus to assess if the models had projected severe scenarios that did not happen, was it because we were forewarned or was it because of the swift interventions we put in place? How does our national response compare with others within the region,, the continent and the world? Is there something we could have been done better and are there lessons we should carry with us to the strategic phase of this war. It should guide us on how to use the lessons learnt from COVID-19 experiences in order to anchor the full national rollout of the Universal Health Coverage, one of the pillars of my Administration's Agenda for the Nation – The 4 Four.

But more importantly, this conference of experts and stakeholders should use pre-mortem analysis to guide us on how to build positive resilience out of the COVID experience. He challenged that we must use this experience and lessons learnt to 'build-back better' and to create a society capable of absorbing shock and emerging on top; but most crucially, a society which unites when called upon to do so in the face of such a monumental challenge.

Pictorials for the Week



L-R. Elly Kurgat, CEC youth, Deputy Governor Nandi County Dr. Yulita Chebotip Cheruiyot, the KANCO regional Coordinator, Steven Ikonya, and Scholastica Tumei Chief Officer after twg forum on Youth and Children Issues at Allens Hotel in Nandi where the deputy governor accepted to be an immunization champion



Isiolo County Health Management Team meeting with the KANCO team



Feedback between KANCO and the Health Management team representatives Meru County

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#StaySafe

#KomeshaCorona