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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fentanyl is here. How are you protecting against it?

Join experts on National Fentanyl Awareness Day to learn more about the drug, how to prevent addiction, and how to reverse an overdose.

South Central Idaho – In 2021, 353 Idahoans lost their lives to drug overdoses. That’s a 23% increase from the year before, according to a recent report from the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (DHW). In the same year, the rate of fentanyl-related overdose deaths doubled in Idaho.

Fentanyl is a pain medication, 100 times stronger than morphine and about 50 times stronger than heroin. It can be prescribed by physicians, but Idaho has seen a growing rate of illegal Fentanyl carried into the state and mixed in to other substances like fake prescription pills and other illicit drugs.

“Fentanyl is growing in popularity because it’s relatively cheap and very strong. It’s also deadly in extremely small doses so mixed drugs become much more dangerous,” said Eli Thompson, South Central Public Health District (SCPHD) health education specialist. “Illicit drugs don’t come with an ingredient list, so Fentanyl can be snuck into virtually anything without the buyer knowing.”

On May 9th, join SCPHD, Twin Falls County Sheriff’s office, the Walker Center, the Twin Falls County Coroner’s office, and the Twin Falls County Prosecuting office in a community panel and information session:

**Fentanyl panel and information session:
May 9th at 6:30 p.m.
CSI Taylor Building, room 277**

The event will cover Fentanyl basics, using naloxone to reverse overdoses, treating addiction, and preventing substance use. There will be time for questions throughout. Topics will include information appropriate for teenagers and adults.

“Exposure to dangerous drugs is becoming more common, especially for teens and young adults,” said Taylor Bybee, SCPHD health education specialist. “One of the best ways to prevent drug-related deaths and addiction is education. Empowering ourselves with the information we need to avoid substance use, or treat it in a healthy and sustainable way, gives our entire community more time to fight back and prevent drug-related deaths.”

Learn more about opioid overdoses and fentanyl use here: <https://www.phd5.idaho.gov/opioid-misuse-prevention/>