



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ONDCP, Truth Initiative and the Ad Council Join Forces on National Effort to Fight Opioid Misuse Among America's Youth and Young Adults

Leading Media Partners and Digital Platforms to Support 'The Truth About Opioids' Campaign

WASHINGTON, DC (June 7, 2018) – The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), Truth Initiative® and the Ad Council today unveiled *The Truth About Opioids*, a comprehensive public education campaign focused on preventing and reducing misuse of opioids among youth and young adults. The multi-channel campaign is designed to help young people understand the facts about opioids, the risk of addiction and the crucial role young people can play in solving the crisis within their communities. The new campaign will be supported in donated media by top digital, social and linear platforms that align with young adults' media consumption, including Amazon, Facebook, Google and YouTube, NBCUniversal, Turner and Vice.

"In the past few years, drug overdose deaths took the lives of more Americans than car crashes, gun violence or breast cancer. The growing opioid epidemic has truly become "the crisis next door." Since the opioid crisis was declared a nationwide public health emergency last fall, President Trump has elevated the drug/demand supply crisis in the public consciousness and as a call to action across the government, and to all Americans. Our partnership with the Ad Council and Truth Initiative is designed to reduce stigma, increase awareness and inspire action, and save lives. This will be the first of many public engagement initiatives from the Trump Administration focused on preventing opioid misuse and addiction" said Kellyanne Conway, Counselor to the President.

"America is facing an opioid crisis that knows no bounds and no community is immune. The Office of National Drug Control Policy is pleased to unveil The Truth About Opioids Campaign with our partners at the Truth Initiative and the Ad Council. The launch of this public education campaign is designed to close the knowledge gap about the risks of opioids and is one more vital step towards saving our loved ones from the opioid crisis" said Deputy Director Jim Carroll, ONDCP.

Created by Truth Initiative, the national public health organization behind the **truth** campaign, the first installment of *The Truth About Opioid's* multi-phased effort, features first-person, true stories of young Americans with opioid use disorder. The content includes the fact that "opioid dependence can happen after just 5 days," and asks young people to "share the truth and spread the truth" with their peers and communities. The concept is based on Truth Initiative research that finds there is a significant knowledge gap about opioids and their risks, as well as a desire among young people to be part of a solution.

"Truth Initiative is proud to offer our knowledge and expertise in creating youth and young adult public health messaging proven to produce real impact to address this urgent crisis that is derailing the lives of young people across our nation." said Robin Koval, President and CEO of Truth Initiative. "We understand that opioid misuse is a complex issue that needs to be tackled from many angles. We are deeply grateful to the young men and women featured in the launch effort for sharing their painful and

powerful truths about opioids misuse to educate others about the risks. *The Truth About Opioids* campaign will unfold over time across a variety of content formats designed to shift knowledge, attitudes, and behavior including reducing the stigma associated with the tragic disease of addiction.”

“The Ad Council has brought together an extraordinary coalition of media and tech partners who reach and engage millions of young people every day. Because of these partners, we can target *The Truth About Opioids* campaign to reach young people with the right messages in the right place at the right time,” said Lisa Sherman, President and CEO of the Ad Council, the non-profit organization behind such cultural movements as ‘Friends Don’t Let Friends Drive Drunk’ and ‘Love Has No Labels.’ “

Major media and platform partners have made significant commitments to the campaign, providing high impact exposure and customized content aimed at reaching the campaign’s youth target throughout the life of the campaign.

The Truth About Opioids’ inaugural campaign was designed and created by Truth Initiative agency partner Haymaker with future creative from 72 and Sunny. Media planning is handled by Assembly.

Statistics on the opioid epidemic

- America loses 174 American people each day to drug overdose.
- The opioid epidemic in America is spreading geographically and demographically, and is truly the crisis next door.
 - It is estimated more than 2 million Americans will suffer from addiction to prescription or illicit opioids in 2018.
 - 63,632 Americans died of drug overdose in 2016, nearly two-thirds of which involved a prescription or illicit opioid.
- In 2013, more than two-thirds of individuals admitted into substance use treatment programs report first use of opioids (other than heroin) by age 25.
- Nearly seven percent of high school seniors report having misused opioids (other than heroin).
- In 2015, over seventy percent of all overdose deaths among those ages 15 to 24 involved an opioid.

For more information, visit opioids.thetruth.com.

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About ONDCP

The Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) works to reduce drug use and its consequences by leading and coordinating the development, implementation and assessment of U.S. drug policy. As a component of the Executive Office of the President, ONDCP advises the President on drug control issues, and the office coordinates the drug control activities and related funding of 16 Federal Departments and Agencies. ONDCP evaluates, coordinates, and oversees both the international and domestic anti-drug efforts of those agencies and ensures that their efforts sustain and complement State and local anti-drug activities.

About Truth Initiative

Truth Initiative, through its **truth**[®] campaign, offers an unmatched expertise and record of success in public education programs targeted to youth and young adults. Since it began in 2000, the **truth** campaign has prevented over one million youth and young adults from smoking. In its nearly 20 years of work in this field, Truth Initiative has engaged youth and young adults in conversations about the risks of addiction and enlisted them to not only modify their own behavior but to influence the cultural norms of peers within their social communities. **truth** interacts with millions of youth through social media platforms on a daily basis and is uniquely positioned to speak to young people about substance abuse and addiction issues.

About the Ad Council

The Ad Council brings together the most creative minds in advertising and media to address the most worthy causes. Its innovative, pro bono social good campaigns raise awareness. They inspire action. They save lives. To learn more, visit AdCouncil.org, follow the Ad Council's communities on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), and view the creative on [YouTube](#).

MEDIA CONTACTS

Ben Dorf / Ad Council
212-984-1991
bdorf@adcouncil.org

Nicole Dueffert / Truth Initiative
202-454-5589
ndueffert@truthinitiative.org