

HMC x Ad Council Student Strategic Excellence Award Youth Fentanyl Awareness & Naloxone Education Campaign Briefing

Issue Background

Fentanyl is a powerful opioid that is often created illegally—it's mixed into illicit drugs and used to create counterfeit versions of prescription pills:

- In 2023, [76%](#) of adolescent drug fatalities involved fentanyl.
- The latest DEA laboratory testing indicates [5 out of 10 counterfeit pills](#) tested in 2024 contain a potentially deadly dose of fentanyl.

In light of this changing drug landscape, it is critical that teens and young adults are aware of the dangers of fentanyl and understand the benefits of carrying naloxone to reverse an opioid overdose.

- Naloxone is a medication that can reverse an opioid overdose. Safe, effective and legal in all 50 states, naloxone is available over the counter as an easy-to-use nasal spray.
- Carrying naloxone and knowing how to use it means young people can be prepared to save a life in the event of an overdose, even if they don't personally use drugs.
- While carrying naloxone and knowing how to use it could save a life, [research](#) published in April 2024 found that only 30% of college students understood what naloxone is used for, and fewer than 15% of students knew how to use it.

Ad Council Campaign Background

To educate young adults about the dangers of fentanyl and the importance of carrying naloxone, the Ad Council launched our Real Deal on Fentanyl campaign in 2022. See campaign examples below.

- [Real Deal – Anthem](#)
- [Naloxone Tutorial \(Living Room – English\)](#) | [Naloxone Tutorial \(Living Room – Spanish\)](#)
- [It's Gotta Be You :60 \(English\)](#) | [It's Gotta Be You :60 \(Spanish\)](#)

All creative drives to RealDealonFentanyl.com (RealidadSobreElFentanilo.com)

Current Campaign Results

- As of October 2024, 24% of youth respondents in the campaign's target were extremely confident they knew how to administer naloxone in the event they were present for an overdose, a campaign high. This grew from an initial awareness of 19% in May 2023. (Ad Council campaign tracking study.)
- 55% of ad-aware respondents in our target have visited a website or social media page to learn about the dangers of fentanyl, compared to 12% of those who are not ad aware (Q4 2024).
- 39% of respondents in our campaign's target have talked to a family member in the last 30 days about the dangers of fentanyl, compared to 19% of those who are not ad aware (Q4 2024).

Assignment

Develop a communications campaign to educate teens and young adults (16-24) about the importance of carrying naloxone. Campaigns may exist under the *Real Deal on Fentanyl* campaign umbrella or be net-new campaign ideas.

Please provide your **campaign strategy, creative concept & execution examples, and proposed objectives and measurement plan** (as detailed in the judging criteria).

Audience

Teens and young adults 16-24. This crisis is impacting all youth and addressing it will require a multicultural communications approach. All young adults should learn about the risks of fentanyl and the importance of carrying naloxone, to be prepared to save a life in the event of an overdose.

- In 2022, white adolescents accounted for 49% of total adolescent drug overdose deaths.
- In 2022, the drug overdose death rate of both Hispanic and Black adolescents (3.3 and 2.8 per 100,000) surpassed the overdose death rate of white adolescents (2.7 per 100,000).
- Further, these drug overdose death rates increased more than fourfold among Hispanic and Black adolescents compared to prior to the pandemic. ([Source](#))

Objective

Educate about the dangers of fentanyl and the importance of carrying naloxone to reverse an opioid overdose, to drive an increase in the percentage of youth who say they carry naloxone and know how to use it.

Creative Deliverables

- Develop a campaign idea that can stretch across mediums. Demonstrate how this big idea can come to life through 2-3 execution examples.
- You are free to select executions in any creative medium you wish in order to demonstrate your idea but should provide context for your selected mediums as part of your communications strategy.
- *Please note that no finalized or finished creative executions will be evaluated by the judges – we only ask for rough mock-ups (i.e., layouts, storyboards, etc.)*

Campaign Duration

- 12 months maximum
 - Key time periods to consider: Back-to-school, Summer vacation

Budget

- \$500,000

Creative Considerations and Watchouts

- Consider the limits of abstinence only messaging: Our *Real Deal on Fentanyl* campaign idea is intended to provide information so young people can make safer decisions and navigate an increasingly dangerous drug landscape.

- Avoid glamorizing drug use. Communications should not make light of, normalize, or glamorize drug use. The focus of the messaging should be on awareness of the risks and empowering young adults to be prepared to save a life by carrying naloxone.
- Avoid stigmatizing individuals who may be living with a substance use disorder or blaming individuals who have overdosed.
 - Communications should avoid stigmatizing individuals who are living with a substance use disorder. This community should not be used to demonstrate negative consequences of drug use.
 - Communications should not direct blame towards individuals who have experienced an overdose. These individuals should not be used as examples.
- Remember that family and friends who have lost loved ones to overdose may see your work.