

On September 20, 2022, Governor Abbott [charged state agencies](#) to increase efforts to inform Texans of the prevalence and lethality of fentanyl. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is coordinating with our state agency partners to raise awareness about the impact of fentanyl in Texas and to provide resources targeted to school personnel, students, and families who we serve. School systems can strategically collaborate with other community-based organizations in the statewide effort to prevent harm from this dangerous drug for school personnel, students, and their families.

FENTANYL: THE LETHALITY AND THE PREVALENCE:

- Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that is 50–100 times more potent than morphine, often lethal with as little as 2 milligrams.
- Over 71,000 Americans died from fentanyl in 2021, an increase of 23 percent from the previous year.
- Over that same period, Texas saw an 89 percent increase in fentanyl-related fatalities, with provisional data showing 1,672 deaths in 2021 as compared to 883 in 2020.
- These are steep increases since 2018, when there were 214 fentanyl-related deaths in Texas.
- Drug traffickers disguise pills that include dangerous fentanyl to look like legitimate prescription drugs, and even candy to target children.
- Fentanyl is impacting individuals with and without substance use disorders.



HERE ARE FIVE ACTIONS THAT YOU CAN TAKE NOW:

1. Review TEA's curated Fentanyl Awareness Resources under [Fentanyl Awareness & Prevention](#), and consider how the resources can help you plan fentanyl awareness and safety actions.
2. Embed important fentanyl awareness content into your existing substance use/misuse prevention programming, train staff, and host awareness events for parents/caregivers.
3. Engage community-based providers, such as [Prevention Resource Centers](#) (PRCs) funded by The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) for speakers, presentations, information and referral, and awareness events.
4. Facilitate life-saving connections to fentanyl and substance use/misuse prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery services. Learn more at [Texas Opioid Response](#).
5. Explore TEA's new [Texas School Mental Health Resource Database](#). TEA and regional education service centers (ESCs) have identified resources throughout Texas to support collaboration with mental health and substance abuse prevention, treatment, and recovery services in each region and statewide. Bookmark this page to visit as new resources are added for school systems.

Share your experiences, strategies, resources, and your questions to help TEA support learning and increase awareness for students, families, and school personnel across Texas. We value your input.

Please email us at mentalandbehavioralhealth@tea.texas.gov.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.