

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Denver Health recognizes Overdose Awareness Day with event, introduces Substance Treatment Line**

*The Center for Addiction Medicine program featured medical experts and people with lived experience to honor lives lost to overdose in 2023.*

DENVER (August 30, 2024) — In recognition of [International Overdose Awareness Day](#), Denver Health is addressing our community's overdose crisis by raising awareness and offering new services for those seeking help. Speakers from Denver Health's [Center for Addiction Medicine](#) (CAM) and people with lived experience addressed the community and held a moment of silence on Denver Health's main campus to bring awareness to preventable overdoses and honor the lives lost to overdose in 2023.

The U.S., Colorado and Denver are experiencing an overdose crisis. In Colorado, [1,865 people died from an overdose in 2023](#). In response, Denver Health is introducing its [newly staffed Substance Treatment Line](#) to the community.

The Substance Treatment Line is staffed by experienced substance treatment experts who can provide brief screening, recommendations and guidance to individuals, friends, families and other professionals on accessing substance treatment at Denver Health and through other programs in the Denver community and surrounding areas.

Anyone with questions can call the Substance Treatment Line at 720-734-2349 to speak with a Behavioral Health Educator on weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

"I am so grateful to be on the receiving end of these calls and for the opportunity to speak with anyone seeking support," Alyssa Campbell, Behavioral Health Educator for the Denver Health Substance Treatment Line, said. "I want to assure you we are here to provide a compassionate, nonjudgmental space for anyone calling in. Recovery can start with a call, and I encourage everyone to share the Substance Treatment Line number with your friends, family members, neighbors and anyone you know who may need it."

The event also commemorated the life of Andy Steven Campos Padilla, whose story of seeking treatment influenced legislation and funding for Denver Health's Adolescent Withdrawal Management Program, the only inpatient program of its kind in the state.

"Andy asked for help. He wanted to get better, but there were no services available to help him," Laura Padilla, Andy's mother, said. "I don't want any other child to experience the pain Andy and my family have experienced because services weren't available. I encourage you to fight for your children, family

and friends. Don't give up. It can feel like a never-ending battle but stay hopeful and keep fighting until a door finally opens."

To recognize Andy's impact and to serve as a reminder of the work still to be done to prevent overdoses, Denver Health's Adolescent Withdrawal Program announced the naming of a family room on the program's floor after Andy — a place where families gather to support their children in the program. Andy's mother received a plaque to be hung outside the family room.

"Family support is an important pillar of adolescent substance treatment," Jonathon Loring, MD, medical director of Denver Health's Adolescent Withdrawal Management Program, said. "A family's ability to have far-reaching impact on a child is so important, and we want to name our program's family room after Andy to honor this importance. Before our program, kids in Colorado were not afforded the opportunity to receive critical inpatient care during withdrawal. Part of Andy's legacy is ensuring adolescents now have access to this lifesaving care."

If you or someone you know is struggling with a substance use disorder, beginning the journey to recovery is just a phone call away with Denver Health's Substance Treatment Line. Call 720-734-2349 Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. to speak with a Behavioral Health Educator and receive guidance and support.

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### **About Overdose Awareness Day**

International Overdose Awareness Day is held on Aug. 31 each year and aims to raise awareness about drug overdose and reduce the stigma of drug-related deaths. It also acknowledges the grief felt by families and friends of those who have died or suffered permanent injury from drug overdose.

Overdose Awareness Day spreads the message that the tragedy of overdose death is preventable. Organizations across the world hold events to mark the day.

### **About the Center for Addiction Medicine at Denver Health**

The Center for Addiction Medicine (CAM) has been an agency-wide strategic initiative for Denver Health since 2019. The goal of CAM is to coordinate the essential health services for people with substance use disorders. CAM has successfully implemented a hub-and-spoke model of addiction medicine that identifies, treats and links patients to the appropriate level of care, regardless of where patients enter our system. CAM includes coordinated addiction services from Denver Health's hospital and emergency departments, community-based clinics, specialized outpatient treatment, Denver County Correctional Care, and residential services, as well as partnerships with community programs.

### **About Denver Health**

Denver Health is a comprehensive health and hospital system that provides high-quality care and proudly serves as the city's safety net hospital. For more than 160 years, Denver Health has been guided by its mission to serve the people of Denver, to educate the next generation of health care professionals and to engage in research and community partnerships to better deliver the health care needs of our patients while strengthening our community.