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Public Comment Welcome at Governor's Opioid and Substance Use Disorder Advisory Group Meeting

Overdose deaths increased nationwide in 2019, taking over 70,000 lives. Idaho is not immune to the struggles of opioid and substance misuse - our state has experienced an increasing number of drug overdose deaths over the last two decades, and in 2019, we lost 264 Idahoans to drug-overdose related deaths¹.

Unfortunately, the unprecedented challenges brought on by COVID-19 are exacerbating the opioid epidemic across the country. The Overdose Detection Mapping Application Program has noted a 20% increase in suspected overdose submissions from participating agencies in the first four months of 2020 compared to the same time last year², and Idaho is seeing an increase in the number of suicides and people falling into relapse³.

All of this makes the mission and work of the Governor's Opioid and Substance Use Disorder Advisory Group even more important. The Advisory Group, commissioned in July 2019 by Governor Brad Little, has spent the last 13 months researching, evaluating, and preparing recommendations for the Governor aimed at combatting opioid and substance misuse in Idaho.

The Advisory Group's last public meeting will be held virtually via Zoom on Wednesday, August 12, 2020. The meeting will include roundtable updates, subcommittee breakout sessions, and an opportunity for public comment at 11:00 a.m. The full schedule and Zoom login information is available via the [meeting agenda](#).

The Governor's Office of Drug Policy values the perspective of Idahoans and welcomes public comment at the upcoming Advisory Group meeting. If interested, please email your name to info@odp.idaho.gov by 9:00 a.m. on August 12 to sign up so we can ensure that you are provided the opportunity to speak.

Melinda Smyser is the Administrator of the Idaho Office of Drug Policy.

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¹ National Center for Health Statistics. (2020, July 15). Provisional drug overdose death counts.

<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/drug-overdose-data.htm>

² Watson, N., Reed, M. (2020, August 8). Overdoses up as people in recovery struggle during pandemic. Idaho Statesman. <https://www.idahostatesman.com/news/nation-world/health-and-medicine/article244832802.html>

³ Logan, S. (2020, April 9). COVID-19 self-isolation puts some Idahoans in worst-case scenario. KBOI. <https://idahonews.com/news/coronavirus/corona-self-isolation-puts-some-idahoans-in-worst-case-scenario>