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## **Oklahoma health insurance provider raises awareness for International Overdose Awareness Day**

*More than 20 million Americans have substance use disorders; GlobalHealth provides tips for those battling drug abuse*

**OKLAHOMA** – According to the latest National Survey on Drug Use and Health, more than 20 million Americans had a substance use disorder in 2016, with more than 8 million battling both mental illness and a substance use disorder. To raise awareness of substance abuse and its connection to mental health, International Overdose Awareness Day will take place on Friday, Aug. 31. GlobalHealth, an Oklahoma-based health insurance provider, is providing information to help those struggling with substance abuse receive the treatment they need to overcome their addiction.

“With numbers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention showing drug abuse killing more Americans in 2016 than the Vietnam War, the nation’s drug overdose epidemic is beginning to take its toll on American families,” said Dr. Wesley Williams, medical director at GlobalHealth. “In a culture where mental illness and substance abuse are still quietly swept under the rug, International Overdose Awareness Day allows us to send the message that every person’s life is valuable and that it is time to end the stigma of those struggling with mental health or drug abuse.”

GlobalHealth is providing the following information to help Oklahomans identify and treat addiction:

**Know the signs.** While substance abuse affects people from all walks of life, it usually produces signs and symptoms that family members and friends can detect in their loved ones. Changes in appearance, such as bloodshot or glazed eyes, dilated or constricted pupils, abrupt weight changes, bruises or infections are all clues to possible drug use. Substance abuse also alters the brain's ability to focus, which can lead to behavioral symptoms, such as increased aggression or irritability, changes in attitude or personality, lethargy, depression, sudden changes in social network, dramatic changes in habits or priorities, financial problems and involvement in criminal activity.

**Treatment options.** When a loved one is struggling with substance abuse, it can be nerve-racking to broach the subject of treatment; however, individuals beat their addictions using both inpatient and outpatient treatment programs. Treatment enables drug addicts to counteract the powerful effects drugs have on the brain and helps them to regain control of their lives, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse. While it may take several attempts at treatment to find what works best for your loved one, addiction can be successfully managed, like other chronic diseases.

**Treatment costs.** As many who overdose frequently suffer from underlying mental health conditions, building and maintaining positive mental health can help combat the connection between mental illness and substance abuse. If you or a loved one is battling a mental illness or drug abuse, contact your insurance provider to determine whether your health insurance covers treatment services. Some health insurance providers, such as GlobalHealth, offer mental health services, chemical dependency and substance abuse benefits for both federal and state employees, with GlobalHealth offering \$0 copays for outpatient visits. When researching treatment options, be sure to ask about payment options or whether they accept your insurance plan.

Since 2001, International Overdose Awareness Day has encouraged individuals to show their support of those battling addiction by wearing silver badges or purple wristbands, both symbols of awareness of overdose and its effects. By acknowledging the grief felt by families and friends who have lost loved ones to drug overdose, International Overdose Awareness Day hopes to create a conversation about overdose and send a message to current and former drug users that help is available.

### **About GlobalHealth**

GlobalHealth is changing health insurance in Oklahoma. As an industry leader, GlobalHealth is an Oklahoma-based health maintenance organization covering 44,000 individuals in all 77 Oklahoma counties. Working proactively with each member, GlobalHealth engages a personalized management plan to address their specific needs and ensure the best possible health outcomes. GlobalHealth utilizes cutting edge, predictive data technology as a foundation to deliver improved healthcare as part of its commitment to making health insurance more affordable. Its membership includes state and education employees, federal employees, municipal employees and Medicare Advantage members. GlobalHealth employs more than 200 associates throughout Oklahoma. To learn more, visit [www.GlobalHealth.com](http://www.GlobalHealth.com).

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