Dear [first/last name],

Stand Up, Mississippi needs your help. Nearly 92,000 individuals in the U.S. died from a drug-involved overdose in 2020 - [averaging 252 lives lost per day](https://nida.nih.gov/research-topics/trends-statistics/overdose-death-rates). Here in Mississippi, we are seeing an alarming spike in drug overdose deaths in recent years. Perhaps most frightening is that Mississippians – many of them our young people - are dying at consistently increasing rates each year.

At [**Stand Up, Mississippi**](https://standupms.org/), we believe you and your [organization/congregation] can play a vital role in preventing opioid overdoses in the communities you serve by raising awareness about the deadly risks associated with taking opioids and other medications not prescribed to them.

**As a [type of organization], we invite [name of organization] to join us in participating in International Overdose Awareness Day on Wednesday, August 31.**

Participation in **International Overdose Awareness Day** can range from:

* Encouraging others to wear purple (the official color of addiction recovery) on August 31st
* Handing out educational materials and local addiction resources at the places you live and work
* Sharing flyers and/or graphics on social media with helpful information with those in your community
* Or even inviting speakers and local government leaders to attend a rally in your community. These resources and more can be found at [www.overdoseday.com](http://www.overdoseday.com)

**The rising concern of fentanyl:** Even though we have seen an impressive drop in opioid prescriptions - counterfeit drugs are infiltrating our communities and becoming an overriding concern. Drug traffickers manufacture pills almost identical to Adderall, Oxycodone and Xanax. However, according to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), these counterfeit pills may contain lethal amounts of fentanyl, heroin, or methamphetamine. Just two grams of fentanyl – about the size of a few grains of salt – can kill an unsuspecting user.

We need all the help we can to spread the message that one pill can be deadly, and the best way to prevent an overdose is to avoid taking any - unless prescribed by a licensed professional. The good news is that recovery is indeed possible, and if we work together, we absolutely can decrease the number of opioid overdoses and overdose-related deaths in our state. Stand Up, Mississippi is a statewide initiative of the Department of Mental Health (DMH) and focuses on ending the opioid crisis in our state and lessening the stigma associated with the disease of addiction. In partnership with the Mississippi Bureau of Narcotics, our goal is to educate Mississippians about the dangers of using opioids and helps those who need substance abuse treatment.

[NAME], thank you for taking the time to consider joining Stand Up, Mississippi, as we reach out to communities about the dangers of taking counterfeit and non-prescription pills. I hope you will join us in recognizing International Overdose Awareness Day. Please, feel free to also contact Stand Up, Mississippi’s Outreach Coordinator, Charlotte Bryant, at 601-359-6176 or Charlotte.Bryant@dmh.ms.gov for more information.

Sincerely,