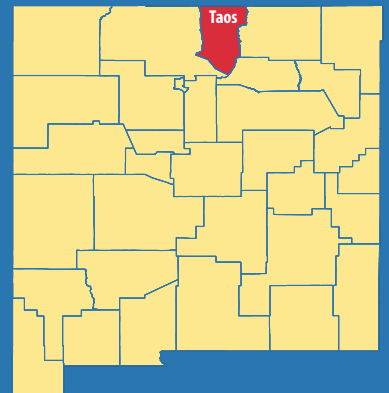


# PUBLIC HEALTH IN TAOS COUNTY

Taos County is nestled between Rio Arriba and Colfax counties and extends to the Colorado border in the Northeast region of New Mexico. It is one of the original nine counties of the New Mexico Territory, formed in 1852. As of 2016, Taos County had a population close to 33,100.

Taos County is noted for a rich and diverse culture, outdoor attractions, and a thriving creative community. The County was a destination for artists from all over the world in the early 20th century, and a center of the counterculture movement of the 1960s and 70s while simultaneously sustaining Hispanic and Native American cultural traditions which have endured for centuries.



## ALCOHOL/SUBSTANCE ABUSE

During 2012-2016, the **RATE FOR DRUG OVERDOSE DEATHS FOR TAOS COUNTY** (29.4 deaths per 100,000) is **HIGHER THAN THE STATE RATE** (23.5 deaths per 100,000) and is **HIGHEST IN THE 35-44 YEAR AGE GROUP.**

### WHAT IS BEING DONE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY TO ADDRESS THIS HEALTH ISSUE?

- Between 2013-2016, almost 1,000 pounds of unused medications were collected from Taos residents through 7 drug takeback events hosted by Taos Alive. These efforts led to the installment of 3 permanent drop-boxes for community members to dispose of unused medications.
- Taos Alive is working to increase access to and training for Naloxone, an overdose reversal drug. Between 2012 and December 2016, Taos Alive dispensed almost 300 Naloxone kits, and trained personnel at 9 sites and 2 law enforcement agencies on the use of Naloxone.
- Between February 2014-September 2016, Taos Alive provided presentations on alcohol policy, substance misuse prevention and media literacy to almost 2,000 elementary, middle and high-school aged youth. The presentations occurred in 25 schools and 3 youth-serving organizations in Taos, Questa and Peñasco.
- Between 2016-2017, the Taos Public Health Office (PHO) distributed 68 doses of Naloxone; collected 85,845 syringes and exchanged 88,850 syringes as part of the Harm Reduction Program.



# ACCESS & AFFORDABILITY



**TAOS COUNTY IS** designated as a **"HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SHORTAGE AREA"** (HPSA), defined as having a **SHORTAGE OF PRIMARY MEDICAL CARE, DENTAL OR MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS.**

## WHAT IS BEING DONE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY TO ADDRESS THIS HEALTH ISSUE?

- Taos County community members and the Taos County Health Council are engaged in a regional collaboration: Regional Health Alliance Northeast (RHANE). The aim of RHANE is to create a model for care coordination which screens health systems clients and identifies their non-medical health-related social needs. These clients would be connected to other agencies to address these non-medical needs.
- During the fall 2016 health insurance enrollment period, the Taos PHO worked outside of its traditional role with BeWell NM to offer an insurance enrollment event. Six different agencies participated in the event by offering educational sessions and assisting individuals with health insurance enrollment.

# SUICIDE PREVENTION

Of New Mexico's 33 counties, **TAOS COUNTY HAS THE 6TH HIGHEST SUICIDE RATE** during 2012-2016: 32 deaths per 100,000. In 2015, **11% OF TAOS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS REPORTED THEY HAVE PLANNED A SUICIDE.**

## WHAT IS BEING DONE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY TO ADDRESS THIS HEALTH ISSUE?

- In response to a cluster of teen suicides in Taos, teens from several local schools organized to form Taos STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) Academy: "A teen fueled, innovation incubator dedicated to providing real-world, best-in-class, STEAM skills enrichment and rigorous code development opportunities for Taos County youth." The group was a state winner of the 2016 Verizon Foundation Innovative App Challenge for their #SEEsomethingSAYsomething (S4) project (<https://seesomethingsaysomething.today/>). The #SEEsomethingSAYsomething team recognizes texting is a primary form of communication for teens, so they partnered with the Crisis Text Line to utilize this type of intervention to address suicide prevention. Teens seeking confidential crisis support are connected through the app to a crisis counselor, 24/7.



For more information contact: Amy Sandoval, Northeast Region Health Promotion Program Manager at [Amy.Sandoval@state.nm.us](mailto:Amy.Sandoval@state.nm.us) or 505-476-2675

### Sources:

- Bureau of Vital Records and Health Statistics (BVRHS), New Mexico Department of Health
- Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey (BRFSS) Data, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- US Department of Health & Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Area Health Resource File (AHRF)
- Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey, Survey Section, Epidemiology and Response Division, New Mexico Department of Health and, NM Public Education Department.
- US Health and Human Services (HHS) Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)