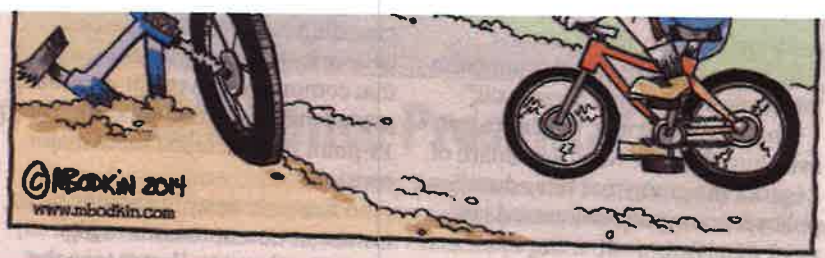


petitions are due. Each village is asked to contact all candidates for a short bio and a photo to run in the *Record*. In uncontested races, we give the candidate a forum to speak to the community. For those vying for contested seats, we send

We ask that our readers take the time to check out these stories, so that they have some facts on which to base their votes. We hope that we can help you make an informed decision.  
— Wendy Karpel Kreitzman



# Contaminated Heroin: A Serious Danger

**BY MARIA ELISA CUADRA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/CEO, COPAY INC.**

The death of Philip Seymour Hoffman and several Long Island teenagers alerts that heroin is available in suburbia and teenagers can be at risk. Education and knowing when a teenager needs treatment is crucial.

Teens often don't know that all routes of administration (inhaling, smoking, sniffing, snorting) are addictive. Buying drugs from strangers is dangerous and over-dose and fatalities are real. Teens have no idea what and how much they're using. Contaminated heroin is also being sold making the risk even higher.

Heroin contaminated with fentanyl can easily be traced back to the sixties, a time of many overdoses. In 2005/2006, an outbreak of contaminated heroin caused over 1,000 deaths nationwide.

Several deaths in Nassau are attributed to heroin contaminated with fentanyl. This doesn't mean we have an "outbreak," however, we need to educate our teenagers and prevent an outbreak.

Heroin contaminated with fentanyl has been sold in packets labeled

"24K," "Bud Ice" and "Thera-Flu." However, all heroine packets, labeled or not, can contain fentanyl. In fact, they can contain anything, making them highly dangerous.

Fentanyl can be 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine. A potent, synthetic, opioid analgesic with rapid onset and short duration, fentanyl has been used as an anesthetic and to treat and/or-manage pain. It is easy to ingest too much fentanyl, causing accidental overdose. Fentanyl can also interact with prescription drugs used to manage pain and anxiety leading to fatalities, particularly in young women.

Heroin is a processed form of morphine. Sold as a white or brown powder, or a black sticky substance ("black tar"), "street heroin" is often "cut" (mixed) with other substances. Heroin has also contained strychnine, other poisons, fentanyl, etc.



Maria Cuadra, executive director, COPAY Inc.

Teens are susceptible to experimentation with heroin if available in their social circles. Unlike adults, who begin addictions to avoid and/or cope with problems, teenagers begin with innocent experimentation. Heroin can easily "derail" teens from a healthy life course and interrupt emotional/psychological growth and academic success.

Addiction causes drug seeking behavior. Behavior changes become obvious to parents but most never suspect most changes are due to drug dependence.

Withdrawal symptoms become visible: restlessness, muscle and joint pain, insomnia, bouts of stomach upset, goose bumps on the skin, feeling cold and involuntary leg movements.

Parents can: read and share this article; be alert to withdrawal symptoms; not assume it's alcohol if a teen is impaired; notice changes in behavior; notice a "different

crowd;" secretiveness; refusal to bring friends home; unexplained periods away; cutting school and drop in performance; reports that your child has misbehaved; arrest or official reprimand for unruly behavior or "intoxication."

Parents whose teenagers have suffered overdoses, often express they thought the teenager was drinking. It never occurred to them that they were using heroin.

Call 911 for medical care for the following: intoxication; slowed/labored breathing; falling asleep; difficult to wake up or not waking up; muscle spasms of any kind; pupils that look small or like "pin points;" discolored nails or lips that appear blue or different.

Teach teens to recognize symptoms and call 911 and then call you. Teenagers hesitate for fear they'll be in trouble. Saving a life, is most important. This saves lives.

The NYS "911 Good Samaritan Law" offers some protection to those who seek emergency care.

Call COPAY today at 516 466-2509. Confidentiality is assured. We've assisted teenagers and families to recover for 45 years.

Letters to the editor are welcomed by the *Great Neck Record*. We reserve the right to edit in the interest of space and clarity. All letters must include an address and daytime telephone number for verification. All material contributed to Anton Community Newspapers in any form becomes the property of the newspapers to use, modify and distribute as the newspaper staff or assigns see fit.