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How is the opioid epidemic affecting you, your family, and your neighborhood? :

I started the organization Cincinnati Against Heroin a couple of years ago to try and help people get pointed in the right direction to get clean & save their lives. Heroin addiction is a personal issue to me because I was an addict for over 20 years and by the grace of God, I have now been clean for 14 years this April 17th, I have also lost a lot of people I loved & cared about, including family to this addiction and for the last 4 years, my son has been using heroin and it is heartbreaking & like living in a nightmare every single day, afraid to answer the phone, checking your phone throughout the middle of the night and worrying yourself sick, that your child is going to die. I know overcoming addiction is a long, hard & scary road but I just want people to know that we do recover, we can recover and we can have a normal life living drug free.

What do you see as causes of the epidemic in your community and in Ohio? :

The main cause I believe is doctors handing out opiate pain medicine like it is candy, a lot of addictions start via legal drugs that they "need" at the time.

What steps might we take as a state to combat the opioid epidemic? :

More readily treatment centers, low income treatment facilities, Judges need to send to rehab centers instead of jail, long term treatment, not just 30-90 days, mandatory therapy to get to the root of the problems that causes the addicts to use.

What might we do as individuals and a community to reduce opioid abuse?:

Reach out to those who may need help, let them know they are not alone, push for more treatment, affordable rehabs.