

County Heroin Summit slated Thursday in Fort

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An educational summit set Thursday, May 1, in Fort Atkinson will bring together leaders from across Jefferson County to discuss the effects of the growing opiate epidemic.

The Jefferson County Heroin Summit will feature presentations from several speakers working in the health and law enforcement fields, who have seen firsthand the toll that heroin and other opiates have taken on area residents in recent years.

Since 2010, more Jefferson County residents than ever before have turned to heroin as their drug of choice, driven by the decreased availability of prescription opiates. The increased prevalence of the drug locally follows a state and nationwide trend, largely due to the increasing difficulty of illegally obtaining prescription opiate painkillers, driving more addicts to its sister drug — heroin.

The number of patients seeking help from county services due to addiction and overdose has surged in recent years, the amount of heroin seized by law enforcement has increased each year, and, for the first time ever, Jefferson County recorded deaths due to heroin overdoses in 2012.

Speakers at the May 1 conference will include Jefferson County District Attorney Susan Happ; Jefferson County Drug Task Force Sgt. Margo Gray; Dr. Douglas Keene of Advanced Pain Management; Kathi Caulley and Holly Pagel, both of Jefferson County Human Services; Melanie Crandall, a local resident impacted by heroin; Lake Mills Police Officer Troy Oestreich and Fort Atkinson Police Officer Daniel Hefty, local Drug Awareness Resistance Education (DARE) officers, and School District of Fort Atkinson District Administrator Dr. Jeff Zaspel.

The event will be held at Jansen's Banquet Hall, 1245 Whitewater Ave., from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., and will be moderated by WFAW Radio news director Michael Clish. Attendees will be able to ask questions of the presenters.