Fully understanding the smoking-gun an increasingly addictive substance. Your child or your family. Their down the whole family in its wake. Experienced it can ever imagine. Maelstrom that only those who have inevitably addiction can catapult your it’s like. Just one use can kill, or the be experimented with just to see what regarded simply as a crazy high that can fully understand going forward that contact with the substance.

Overdoses in Cincinnati averaged 29 per day, totaling 174 in that six-day span. The carfentanil-laced heroin was so toxic that emergency responders had to use protective gear when in contact with the substance.

Our teens and young adults must fully understand going forward that the allure of heroin can’t ever be regarded simply as a crazy high that can be experimented with just to see what it’s like. Just one use can kill, or the inevitable addiction can catapult your entire family into a gut-wrenching, draining, horrifying money pit of a maelstrom that only those who have experienced it can ever imagine.

Addiction is a vortex that takes down the whole family in its wake. Drug dealers don’t care about your child or your family. Their primary concern is selling more of an increasingly addictive substance. Fully understanding the smoking-gun theory, in which the perpetrator is the one who actually pulls the trigger, it is my opinion that dealers who lace heroin with carfentanil should be prosecuted as murderers.

Adding carfentanil to heroin is the equivalent of adding poison to candy. Even though we know it is bad for us, many of us choose to eat candy.

However, we would never knowingly buy and consume our favorite candy if we were aware that deadly toxins had been added.

Anyone who surreptitiously augments heroin with a substance that is as unequivocally lethal as carfentanil should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

Since publishing the first part of our series on the Atlanta area’s Jewish Heroin Triangle Sept. 2, we have heard from you. Heroin addiction in our community and beyond is far more prevalent than most of us can fathom. It is an epidemic that we must acknowledge and wage war against. Additionally, as discussed in Cady Schulman’s Sept. 9 article, “Drug Treatment Success Begins With Genes,” the issue of genetic predisposition to addiction is rising, in sync with the need to regard addiction as a disease.

It is increasingly clear that there is a genetic component, and some people react differently than others when exposed to the same drug. Just as we don’t judge a diabatic for a physical reaction to a substance, to combat this epidemic our society needs to shift from regarding a person with the inability to metabolize medication as a criminal and instead consider that person as an individual with a disease that requires education and personal vigilance (just like diabetes).

I believe that genetic testing will enable progress in identifying those at risk in our efforts to reverse the deadly trend of addiction.

To be fair, a distinction should be drawn between opioid dependence from a prescription and purely recreational consumption, but the issues of metabolism and disease still exist.

In the coming weeks you’ll read of sudden, tragic loss, of shattered dreams and a family that has thrown everything at addiction in the battle for a child’s life, and of emergence from recovery and the possibility of an inspiring and hopeful future.

We’ll also explore anti-addiction and recovery resources that more members of our community would like to make a reality. Get out your checkbooks, and stay tuned.

Guest Column
By Leah R. Harrison
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Carfentanil in Cincinnati

Carfentanil is so new to authorities, according a New York Times article Sept. 5, that the Hamilton County coroner’s office “had to call zoos, rural veterinarians, federal law enforcement authorities and a licensed manufacturer in Canada to find a sample” to use to calibrate drug-testing equipment.

It’s “an animal tranquilizer used on livestock and elephants with no practical use for humans,” and my MacBook spell-check doesn’t yet recognize the name of the drug.

A mere 2 milligrams of carfentanil can knock out a 2,000-pound elephant, and an amount smaller than a snowflake can be deadly to a human.

Suspected to be a test batch that was permeating the Hamilton County (Cincinnati) area, the potent mixture monopolized two-thirds of the police officers on the street, flooded emergency rooms and had first responders carrying two to three extra doses of the antidote naloxone for themselves in case of ingestion or any physical exposure. Calls went out to declare the epidemic a public health emergency.

While one quick spray of naloxone is typically enough to reverse a heroin overdose, Cincinnati first responders found that they had to use two, three or up to five doses to revive people from the carfentanil-laced heroin during that deadly wave of overdoses.