

Building Healthier Communities Through Digital Prevention Education

How UnityPoint Health Empowers High School Students to Make Safe Choices Regarding Prescription Drugs

The Problem

Hospitals and health systems make a commitment to serve the health and wellness needs of the community and do so by providing treatment and solutions to address dire public health concerns.

With opioid overdoses surpassing auto accidents as the leading cause of accidental deaths in 2017, it's no surprise that the results from Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNAs) across the country point to substance abuse as a critical focus area.. UnityPoint Health is focused on addressing this public health crisis at a local level to make a difference in the communities they serve.

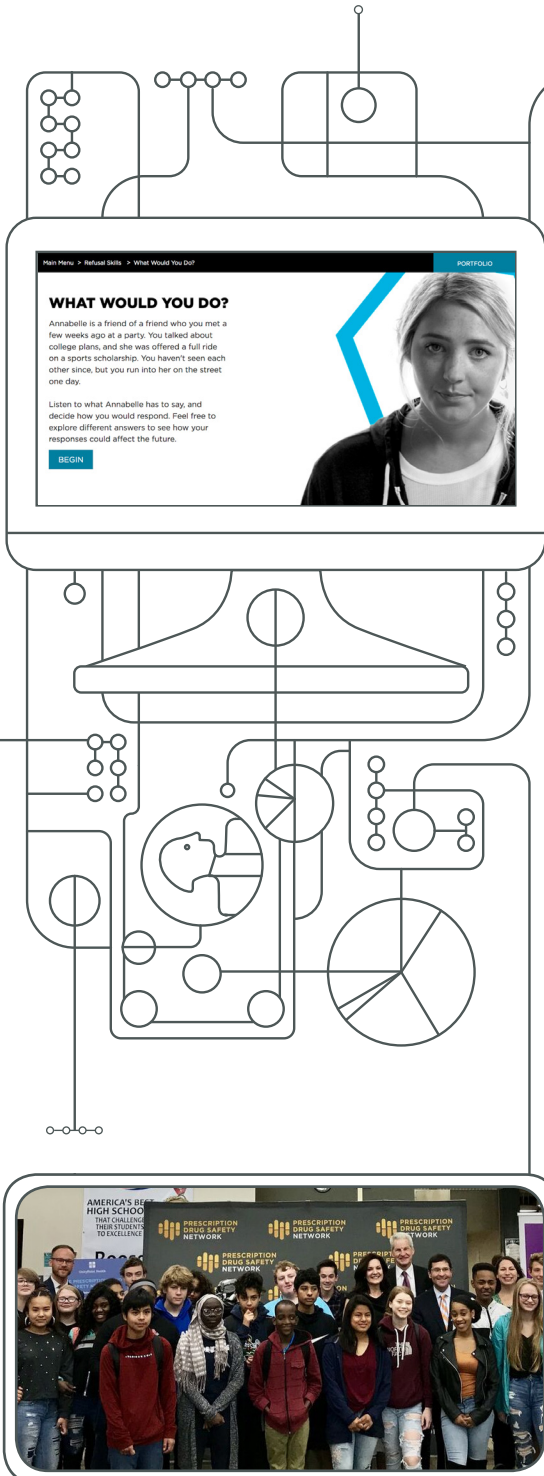
"Behavioral health and substance abuse is one of our number one priorities. Our mission is to help people keep well and help them avoid misusing prescription drugs, which has become a national public health emergency."

- Sabra Rosener | Vice President of Government and External Affairs for UnityPoint Health, Des Moines

The Solution

UnityPoint Health partnered with the Prescription Drug Safety Network, powered by EVERFI, to provide digital youth prevention education targeted to the high school level. Given the complexity and sensitivity regarding prescription drug misuse, providing students in the community with an evidence-based resource was a high priority for the health system. Because UnityPoint Health's leadership, physicians, and staff care about this important health concern impacting patients and their families, EVERFI's solution was a turnkey way for them to provide additional resources to help fulfill a critical need in their community.

Prescription Drug Safety takes a proactive, positive, approach to tackling the epidemic by empowering students with the knowledge and skills to make safe and healthy decisions about prescription medications. The program is an extension of the important work being done inside the hospital to address the opioid epidemic: patient treatment and recovery, prescription drug monitoring, and prescribing limitations. The digital platform allows individual UnityPoint Health regions to engage students and the community on this topic outside of a visit to a hospital or clinic. In-platform custom resources also direct students to local UnityPoint Health clinics for support.



"The digital format for the course makes it more accessible. Youth today are very comfortable operating in that world. We hope that programs like this will help reduce the stigma around addiction and help people realize that this is an issue in every community."

- Kevin Carroll | Vice President of Behavioral Health, UnityPoint Health, Des Moines

The investment in youth prevention education is supported by UnityPoint Health's regional foundations, creating a true community-led effort to tackle the opioid epidemic.

The Impact

As part of the Prescription Drug Safety Network, UnityPoint Health has provided the digital resource to public and private schools in 25 counties across primarily Iowa, with additional schools in counties in Illinois, Nebraska, and South Dakota.

As the first health system to join the Network, UnityPoint Health is demonstrating their strong commitment to their stakeholders and to local and state legislators. Their involvement in the Network allows them to tell a powerful story to their stakeholders and provides them an opportunity to take concrete action by sponsoring prevention education in schools.

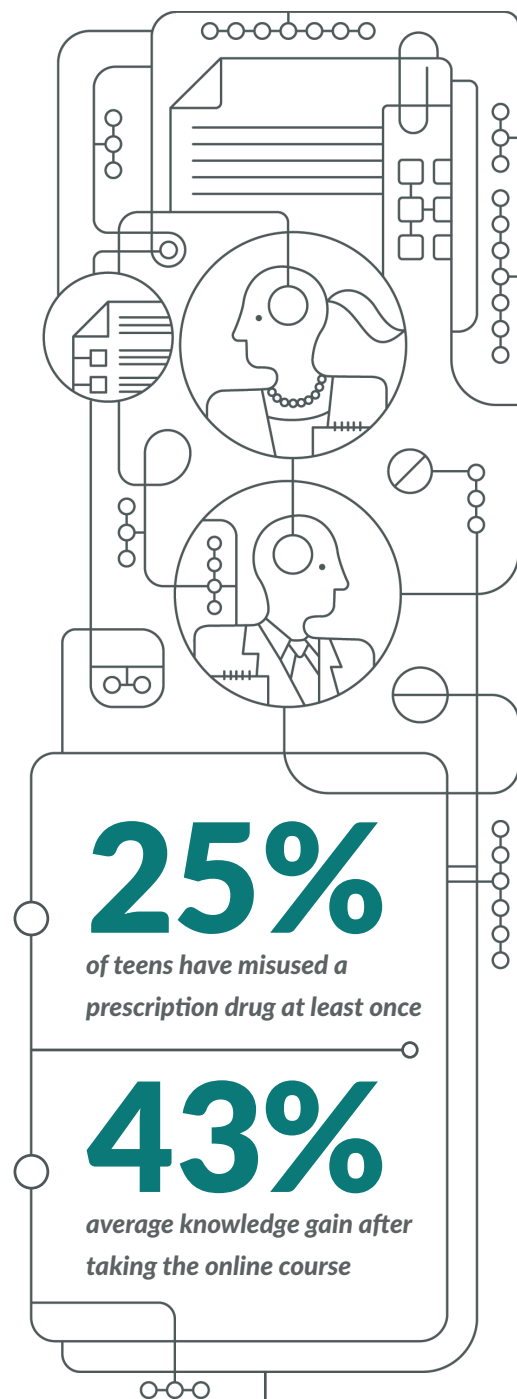
The investment demonstrates that UnityPoint Health is a leader on this vital issue. Hospitals compete for patients with neighboring systems. New and innovative community engagement touchpoints enable them to talk about their services and commitment to health and wellness in a different capacity.

Looking Forward

UnityPoint Health is exploring additional partnerships to bring this digital program to more communities in their regions. They also hope to expand their commitment to include other prevention education issues such as mental wellness. UnityPoint Health is proud of its commitment to addressing this important community health problem and the quality of the digital education program for students and educators.

"At UnityPoint Health, we're committed to demonstrating how much our patients matter to this world in everything we do in our facilities and in our communities. I can't think of a better way than investing in our kids through prevention education. We have an opportunity to make a difference in kids' lives that can affect them for decades. The earlier we provide awareness and intervention, the better chance we have to make a lifelong impact."

- David Stark | President & CEO UnityPoint Health, Des Moines



Learn more about the Prescription Drug Safety Network at everfi.com/pdsn