

The state of Illinois is receiving millions of dollars to help in the fight against opioid abuse and addiction.

The Illinois Department of Human Services, or I-D-H-S announced Wednesday it will receive more than 16 million dollars in federal money to help fight the state's opioid crisis. The money will go toward prevention, treatment and recovery services.

OSF HealthCare emergency room physicians say opioid education is the first step in fighting abuse.

SOT

Dr. Darrell Rust, OSF HealthCare Emergency Room Physician

"I think people need to be aware - I think people sometimes accidentally overdose and those can certainly be helped with education, and then the education, just as far as dangers that are out there, will help with some people that may have otherwise tried things that ended up getting them in trouble, to the point of even overdosing."

Like many states, Illinois has seen a big increase in drug overdose deaths that can be tied to an increase in opioid use and abuse.

In 2015, I-D-H-S reported 1,835 opioid-related overdose deaths in Illinois - a 16 percent increase from 2013.

SOT

Dr. Darrell Rust, OSF HealthCare Emergency Room Physician

"We see a variety of things. We see the obvious overdoses, the heroin overdoses and those kinds of things, but we see lots of people using much more pain medication than we previously saw, and it seems to lead to problems."

A U.S. surgeon general's report found only one in 10 people with a substance use disorder receives the care they need, but there are treatment resources available.

SOT

Dr. Darrell Rust, OSF HealthCare Emergency Room Physician

"From the point of view both as a physician that treats people with addiction problems and a physician who works in the emergency department, people need to realize that it is a widespread problem, that it's not just the junkies. It's your neighbors. It's your kids. It's your mom and dad. It's everywhere, so be aware."

If you or a family member are currently struggling with addiction, Dr. Rust recommends speaking with a physician to get immediate help.