



Public Health

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Panhandle Health District

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Healthy People in Healthy Communities

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NEWS RELEASE

Sam Quinones, Critically Acclaimed Author, to be Keynote Speaker at Substance Use Summit

Panhandle Health District – June 6, 2023

Panhandle Health District (PHD) is hosting their annual Substance Use Summit Thursday, June 15, 2023 at the Red Lion Templin's on the River. This year, the keynote speaker is Sam Quinones, a critically acclaimed author, journalist, storyteller, and former LA Times reporter. Quinones most recent book is *The Least of Us: True Tales of America and Hope in the Time of Fentanyl and Meth*, released in 2021. The book follows Quinones 2015 release, *Dreamland: The True Tale of America's Opiate Epidemic* by Bloomsbury Press. Both books are critically acclaimed. In January 2022, *The Least of Us* was nominated for a National Book Critics Circle award for Best Nonfiction Book of 2021. *Dreamland* won a National Book Critics Circle award for the Best Nonfiction Book of 2015.

“Sam will bring so much knowledge and history on the topic of opioids as our keynote speaker at this year’s Summit,” said Kim Young, PHD Health Services Division Administrator. “Attendees will also learn from healthcare professionals, clinicians, law enforcement, first responders, and community experts about addressing and preventing substance use.”

The Summit will also feature:

- Public Health and Public Safety Overview of Drugs in Idaho
- Treating Substance Use Disorder and Opioid Use Disorder in Criminal Justice Settings
- Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT)
- Be Where Your Feet Are – Building Your Own Resiliency
- Community Health and Naloxone Leave Behind Programming
- Foundations of an Overdose Fatality Review Team and Substance Use Disorder Case Studies
- Special documentary screening of *Call Me: Stories From North Idaho*

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, between April 2020 and April 2021, an estimated 100,306 drug overdose deaths occurred in the United States, an increase of 28.5% from the 78,056 deaths that occurred during the prior year. The Idaho

Department of Health and Welfare reports that in 2021 there were over 2.6 million opioid prescriptions written in Idaho and over 5,000 emergency department visits related to non-fatal drug overdose.

“Substance use is a widespread issue that impacts communities across the nation and unfortunately, Idaho is no exception,” said Young. “Our goal is to address this crisis by providing intervention and prevention education to health care professionals and first responders at the Summit. It’s a great opportunity for our community to share best practices and connect with local partners.”

Quinones will be having a book signing at the event and a copy of *The Least of Us* will be provided courtesy of PHD. For more information and to register for the Substance Use Summit, visit [Eventbrite](#). Lunch and refreshments will be provided and CE/CME, P.O.S.T. and EMT/EMT-P credits available to attendees.

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Panhandle Health District provides over 40 different public health programs to families, individuals and organizations in northern Idaho. From food and drinking water safety to health education and disease control, public health services are critical to ensure our community is a safe and healthy place to live, work and play.

The PHD team is made up of nurses, nutritionists, environmental health specialists, health educators and many other dedicated professionals with a common goal to deliver vital public health services.

Panhandle Health District is one of seven health districts in the state of Idaho.