

# USU Extension and USU Libraries Launch Digital Library Focused on Opioid Crisis

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The Utah State University Extension Health Extension: Advocacy, Research, & Teaching (HEART) Initiative, in partnership with USU Libraries, recently launched a digital library collection featuring stories from people affected by the opioid crisis.

“Informing the National Narrative: Stories of Utah’s Opioid Crisis Digital Collection” is now available online for anyone to access.

The collection is made up of 32 interviews (both audio and transcripts) featuring individuals from nine Utah counties who have a personal connection to the opioid epidemic, including people in recovery, family members, treatment providers and others. The collection is focused on persevering the stories of the opioid crisis in Utah in order to bring hope and healing to those affected by this epidemic.

From 2013 through 2015, Utah’s opioid overdoses outpaced deaths from firearms, falls and motor vehicle accidents. During the last several years, health agencies and local coalitions have worked to combat this epidemic through addressing opioid prescribing habits, educating the public about their addictive properties and improving access to services to those who have a substance use disorder. However, more work needs to be done to address the negative stigma surrounding substance use

disorders, according to Kandice Atismé, USU Extension health and wellness assistant professor.

“There is a stigma surrounding substance misuse, perpetuating the idea that substance misuse is the result of a moral failing and only experienced by ‘bad’ or ‘weak’ people,” Atismé said. “This collection aims to combat that belief. We are excited to have the digital collection live and to share these amazing narratives with our communities.”

The HEART Initiative is a new pilot initiative through USU Extension. This cutting edge, 4-year pilot program brings unique academic resources into the community, partnering locally and nationally to address the opioid epidemic and other pressing public health issues.

To access the digital collection, visit <https://digital.lib.usu.edu/digital/collection/p16944coll134>. For more health and community resources, visit <https://extension.usu.edu/>.

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