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Contact:

Michael K. Frisby

Mike@frisbyassociates.com 202-625-4328

Tony Newman

tnewman@vitalstrategies.org 646-335-5384

STAR DETROIT RADIO HOSTS JOIN CAMPAIGN TO REDUCE BLACK OVERDOSE DEATHS WITH LIFE-SAVING NALOXONE

Radio Celebrities Send Powerful Messages for ‘You Have the Power to Save Lives’ Campaign

DETROIT, MI – Two of Detroit’s popular radio hosts, Bushman, the PM Drive host on Mix 92.3, and Bigg Dawg Blast, the PM Drive host on FM 98 WJLB, are lending their voices and energy to the *You Have the Power to Save Lives* campaign. Overdoses have surged in Black communities in recent years and are now the leading cause of preventable death among Black adults in the United States. This campaign brings local and national leaders together to raise awareness and promote public uptake of the overdose-reversing medication naloxone in local communities.

The hosts have recently hit the radio airwaves with strong messages advocating that Black Detroiters access naloxone, often known by the brand name Narcan. Naloxone is available for free in naloxone boxes and via health providers in local neighborhoods. The hosts’ narratives are authentic and powerful. Their messages resonate. To listen, go to the [audio section](#) in our website's newsroom.

“I’ve witnessed the heartbreak addiction can bring, like when my close friend lost her younger brother to an overdose,” said Bigg Dawg Blast. “I’ve also seen families fighting to save their loved ones. Naloxone has the power to reverse an overdose, and the *‘You Have the Power to Save Lives’* campaign is about making sure people understand that hope exists. Every life

matters, and by spreading awareness, we can help prevent tragedies. I'm proud to support this effort and be part of the solution."

Meanwhile, the Bushman said, "Over the past several years, I've lost friends to overdoses. They left behind kids, friends, and families that will forever be affected by their deaths. I want to encourage people to learn more about naloxone that has been proven to save lives. No one should have to go through this pain."

The *"You Have the Power to Save Lives"* campaign launched last month in Detroit and six other cities: Albuquerque, New Mexico; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Louisville, Kentucky; Durham, North Carolina; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and Newark, New Jersey. The campaign, with its strong emphasis on community engagement, focuses on activating community leaders in Black communities to expand the availability and utilization of naloxone, a lifesaving, overdose-reversing nasal spray medication. At the heart of the campaign is a new website – YouCanSaveLives.org – where people can find out where to obtain naloxone near them, hear powerful, real-world testimonials, and take action to spread the word about the importance of naloxone.

"We know that the opioid crisis is a serious issue in Detroit," said Marshea Browner, Director of Community Health Services at the Detroit Health Department. "As this epidemic continues to impact communities within the city of Detroit, the Detroit Health Department, in partnership with Vital Strategies, is taking action to help save lives. One of the most important tools we have to combat this issue is naloxone, a life-saving medication that can reverse an opioid overdose in minutes. Carrying naloxone is not just an option, it's a necessity, and it's one of the ways we can make a direct impact in our community directly."

Supported by public health organization Vital Strategies, the campaign includes more than a dozen community groups, health organizations, and local government agencies. Their efforts focus on establishing new naloxone distribution points in Black communities—including neighborhood gathering spaces and local health providers—to reduce stigma around carrying naloxone and empower individuals to save lives in the event of an overdose.

The campaign also released [a report](#) consolidating recent evidence that illustrates the need for urgent action to save lives, finding:

- In 2023, the rate of overdose death [was three times higher for Black Michigan residents](#) than for the white population. Black residents accounted for almost half of all overdose deaths in the state, and in the five years through 2023, Black men aged 60 to 69 years experienced the highest overdose rate in the state.
- [One in five Michigan residents](#) lost to overdose lived in Detroit in 2023. In Wayne County, where Detroit is located, the Black population is dying from overdose at twice the rate of the white population.
- Overdose is [the leading cause of injury death for Black adults](#) in the United States, surpassing gun violence and car crashes. In many cities, older Black men are [four times more likely](#) to die of overdose than other men in their age group.

The rising death toll has alarmed the radio hosts, driving them to participate in the campaign and use their platform to influence the community.

“This is real talk,” Bushman proclaims to his listeners. “Do you know anyone that's struggling right now from addiction or know someone who knows somebody that's struggling with addiction? Or do you know someone that has passed away because they had an addiction problem? Did you know this? Almost 50% of overdose deaths in the state of Michigan are African Americans. Yes, we gotta do better. Go to YouCanSaveLives.org right now and find out how you can get some free naloxone. That's the spray that you spray up somebody's nose when they're in an overdose situation. It can counteract the effects of that overdose and it's free, no questions asked, and right there in your community. Go and find out how you can get it. YouCanSaveLives.org. Please do not beat around the bush because if you do know somebody that's struggling from addiction, you could be the difference in life and death for them if you catch them having an overdose.”

Bigg Dawg also delivers a strong message.

“Now, I know when you hear drug overdose, the first thing you think, oh yeah, that's something that happens over in the suburbs,” he says. “No. A lot of it's happening right here in our own community. Almost up to 50% of the cases are right here in the Black community, and one of the reasons is the users are getting counterfeit pills laced with fentanyl and they don't even know it. They're thinking that they're taking something so they can enjoy themselves. Next thing you know, they're in trouble. They're having a drug overdose, and that's where you can come in and save their life by using naloxone.

“It's harmless, and it can reverse an overdose right on the spot. What I need you to do is go to YouCanSaveLives.org and you can find out where you can get naloxone free, no questions asked, right in your community. Come on, let's be a part of the solution. Go to YouCanSaveLives.org.”

Daliah Heller, Vice President for Overdose Prevention Initiatives at Vital Strategies, thanked the radio hosts for participating in the campaign, saying, “They have powerful voices that can help the campaign save lives in Detroit. We are grateful for their participation.”

Further, Heller said, “We are cautiously optimistic about declining overdose death rates nationally, but not everyone is benefiting. Rates are higher among Black adults than their white counterparts, and we urgently need equitable investments and focused strategies to address this difference. This campaign is making lifesaving naloxone more widely available in Black communities in Detroit and six other cities, and mobilizing Black people to carry it to protect friends, family, and community.”

(For print or broadcast interviews about the campaign, contact Michael K. Frisby Mike@frisbyassociates.com 202-625-4328 or Tony Newman tnewman@vitalstrategies.org 646-335-5384.

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About Vital Strategies

Vital Strategies is a global health organization that believes every person should be protected by a strong public health system. Our overdose prevention program works to strengthen and scale evidence-based, data-driven policies and interventions to create equitable and sustainable reductions in overdose deaths in several U.S. states and local jurisdictions.

About the National Black Harm Reduction Network:

The National Black Harm Reduction Network is dedicated to advancing harm reduction principles that optimize health and wellness for Black people who are disproportionately harmed by public health initiatives, the criminal legal system, and drug policies.