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## San Fernando Valley Symposium Aimed At Sharp Rise In Heroin Use



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**GRANADA HILLS (CBSLA.com)** – Does "America's Suburb" have a heroin problem?

That's the question at the heart of the [2014 Heroin Kills symposium](#) set to take place in Granada Hills this week. The event is sponsored by the nonprofit [Because I Love You \(BILY\)](#) and will feature speakers including City Councilman Mitch Englander along with police, fire and family counseling officials.

Heroin use across the San Fernando Valley - which is currently home to some 1.8 million people - has seen an "astronomical rise" over the last decade in what has often been referred to as America's largest and most racially diverse suburb, according to BILY organizers.

Officials with the international 32-year old non-profit said there has been a sharp rise in the use of smoke-able marijuana-heroin blends, as well as Mexican black tar [heroin](#) due to its availability in a



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health report, drug overdose was the the top cause of premature old.

BILY founder and author Dennis Poncher said a flood of local parents have turned to the organization for help in the last several years after discovering that their child was a heroin addict.

"We want parents and, really, the entire Valley community to learn the shocking truth about teen heroin use in the San Fernando Valley," said Poncher. "It is one of the most easily accessible drugs for our youth in our nation today, and it is cheap and easy to come by in the Valley, too.

We all need to come to grips with that," he added.

The Heroin Kills Symposium, which is free to attend, is scheduled for Thursday, January 16, beginning at 6:30 p.m. at Granada Hills Charter High School located at 10535 Zelzah Avenue.

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