LEONARDTOWN, Md. – The Maryland Department of Health has announced two multi-media advertising campaigns to help raise awareness and combat the state’s opioid epidemic.

In an effort to reduce the rate of overdose deaths among Marylanders, the state health department’s first campaign addresses the social stigma associated with opioid addiction, a stigma that discourages many from seeking appropriate – and, in many cases, life-saving – medical treatment.

“Through public awareness and education, we can help those seeking treatment overcome the stigma that often comes with addiction,” said Tammy Loewe, Behavioral Health Director at the St. Mary’s County Health Department. “These campaigns are a valuable tool in the fight against the opioid crisis in our state and our county.”

With the tagline “Less Judgment. More Compassion,” this anti-stigma campaign stresses that opioid addiction is not a moral failing to be judged, but rather a chronic disease that requires treatment.

The second campaign, “Talk to Your Doctor,” stresses the importance of speaking candidly with your health care provider when being prescribed an opioid pain medication because these medications can be highly addictive. The campaign’s proactive message is: “Take charge of your health. Reduce the risk of addiction. Talk to your doctor about opioid pain medications.”

For more information about state and local efforts to address opioid awareness, please visit www.smchd.org/opiod.