



# Huron County Board of Mental Health and Addiction Services

2 Oak Street • Norwalk, Ohio 44857 • 419-681-6268

## Overdose Awareness Month

August is Overdose Awareness Month, with August 31<sup>st</sup> being observed as Overdose Awareness Day. Overdose is the leading cause of death for people ages 18 to 45 in America today. More than 100,000 people died of an overdose in the United States in the 12-month period ending in March 2022. Specifically, in Ohio, data for 2020 surpassed 2017 as the highest year for unintentional drug overdose deaths in Ohio, with 5,017 deaths. This was a 3% increase over 2017 and a 25% increase over 2019. Many of us know one of the 100,000, some of us know more than one, and some of us may know dozens. Among this group are our children, siblings, parents, grandparents, cousins, non-blood relatives, and friends.

Overdose Awareness Month raises awareness of overdose and stimulates discussion and action towards overdose prevention. It is a time to remember those we've lost to overdose, acknowledge the grief of the family and friends left behind, and renew our commitment to end overdose and related harms.

### Identifying an Overdose and Action Steps

#### *What is an Overdose?*

An overdose means having more of a drug (or combination of drugs) in your system than your body can cope with. There are several signs and symptoms that show someone has overdosed, however, these differ depending on the type of drug used. It is important to note that *all* drugs can cause an overdose, including prescription medication prescribed by a doctor and alcohol. Generally, people do not automatically think of alcohol when they think of overdose, but alcohol is a depressant and it is possible to overdose on it. Acute alcohol poisoning, which is usually a result of binge drinking, is an example. Mixing alcohol and certain medications can also cause overdose.

#### *First Aid for Drug Overdose*

A range of signs and symptoms can occur when a person overdoses, and everyone responds differently. Signs and symptoms depend on a variety of factors including which substance has been consumed, the amount taken and the person's state of health at the time. If you can't get a response from someone, do not assume they are asleep. Sometimes it can take hours for someone who has overdosed to die. An overdose is a medical emergency that requires immediate medical attention. Always call 911 if you suspect someone has overdosed.

### Preventing Overdose and Overdose Fatalities

#### *Project Dawn/Naloxone Distribution and Education Sites*

Huron County has increased its number of Naloxone distribution sites from 1 to 5 within the last two years. All Huron County entities listed below offer free education and training for Naloxone (Narcan), free Naloxone kits, as well as information on services and supports for individuals who are struggling with substance use.

- Let's Get Real (2 Oak St., Norwalk, OH 44857 - located in the basement of Huron County Mental Health and Addiction Services)
- Willard Fire & Rescue (425 Fort Ball Rd., Willard, OH 44890)
- Huron County Public Health (28 Executive Drive, Norwalk, OH 44857 -vending machine)
- Animal House Sober Club (206 W Main St., Bellevue, OH 44811)
- Citizens Ambulance (19 Railroad Ave., Wakeman, OH 44889)



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### *Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)*

Medication-assisted treatment (MAT) is treatment for addiction that includes the use of medication along with counseling and other supports. Treatment that includes medication is often the best choice for opioid addiction. If a person is addicted, medication allows him or her to regain a normal state of mind, free of drug-induced highs and lows. It frees the person from thinking all the time about the drug, reduces problems of withdrawal and helps people manage their addiction so that the benefits of recovery can be maintained. Below is a list of local agencies that provide MAT:

- Family Life Counseling & Psychiatric Services: 567-560-3584
- Firelands Counseling & Recovery Services: 419-663-3737
- Huron County Public Health: 419-668-1652
- Oriana House LLC: 567-280-4023

### *Medication Deactivation Solutions*

Deterra® Drug Deactivation System Pouches and Dispose Rx Packets are two effective ways to provide safe, convenient, and permanent disposal of unused, expired, or unwanted medications at home or in a clinical setting. By safely disposing of medication that will not be used, we can reduce the likelihood that medication will be abused and reduce chances of overdose. Both medication disposal solutions are available at MHAS or Huron County Public Health.

### **The goals of Overdose Awareness Month are:**

- To provide an opportunity for people to publicly mourn loved ones in a safe environment, some for the first time without feeling guilt or shame.
- To reduce the stigma surrounding substance use and overdose by looking beyond the statistics and seeing an individual as someone's son, daughter, mother, father, friend, loved one, etc.
- To provide community members with information about the issues of fatal and non-fatal overdose.
- To send a strong message to current and former people with substance use disorder that they are valued, their life matters, and there is help available.
- To stimulate discussion about overdose prevention.
- To provide information on the range of local supports and services that are available for both substance use and mental health.

### **What can you do?**

- Encourage your workplace/community to participate in Overdose Awareness observance activities.
- Offer an educational program, such as one related to preventing substance use and overdose, in partnership with a local organization within your business, organization, or school. *For information on educational trainings offered by MHAS on mental health and substance use, visit <https://www.hcbmhas.org/trainings>.*
- Share information related to substance use and services and supports available for help with your employees, congregation, staff, and family. *Visit [www.hcbmhas.org](http://www.hcbmhas.org) for more information.*
- Pick up a Naloxone kit and educational resources. Two of our Naloxone distribution sites will be offering free Naloxone and education this month.
  - Willard Fire & Rescue (425 Fort Ball Rd. Willard) August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023
  - Let's Get Real (2 Oak Street. Norwalk) August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023 8:30am-4:00pm



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*Prevention works, treatment is effective, and people can recover from mental health and substance use challenges and live full and productive lives.*

### Resources for Help

If you or someone you know is in an emergency, call 911 immediately.

If you are in crisis or are experiencing difficult or suicidal thoughts, you can call:

Huron County Crisis HopeLine: 567-867-HOPE (4673)

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988

If you're uncomfortable talking on the phone, you can also text 4HOPE to 741-741 to be connected to a free, trained crisis counselor on the Crisis Text Line.

*For more information on overdose prevention and the services and supports available within the community, visit [www.hcbmhas.org](http://www.hcbmhas.org).*

Sources: <https://www.nsc.org/>

<https://www.overdoseday.com/#>

<https://www.samhsa.gov/blog/overdose-awareness-day-remember-act>

Source: The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) 'World Drug Report 2020'

Sources: The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) 'World Drug Report 2019'; The Centre for Disease Control '12 Month-ending Provisional Number of Drug Overdose Deaths', as of April 4, 2021

<https://mha.ohio.gov/Health-Professionals/About-Mental-Health-and-Addiction-Treatment/Medication-Assisted-Treatment>