



**HEALTH
DEPARTMENT**
Public Health Unit

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH- Linda Beers, MPH
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH PROMOTION &
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For More Information:

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Overdose Spike ALERT : Essex County, New York is in a Drug Related Overdose Spike.

Elizabethtown, NY. At the request of the Essex County Sheriff's Department, The Essex County Health Department is alerting the community to a spike in drug related overdoses between February 1st and February 14th. An overdose spike is defined as a suspected number of overdoses that occur within a certain timeframe exceeds the threshold of normal activity. Currently Essex County spike alert threshold is two overdose incidents in 24 hours. The Overdose Mapping and Application Program (ODMAP) provides near real-time suspected overdose surveillance data. The data has indicated since February 1st there have been a total of four overdoses one fatal, of which two were in the last 24hrs. While laboratory results are pending for each of the cases, opioids are confirmed or suspected to be the cause.

"Sadly, a drug overdose is no longer a rare occurrence," stated Linda Beers, Director of Public Health for ECHD. It has become increasingly important that community members who may witness an opioid overdose – by friend, family, or stranger – be familiar with naloxone." Naloxone (Narcan) is an emergency medication that can reverse an opioid overdose. Essex County Health Department has initiated a local response to the abuse of Prescription (Rx) drugs and heroin in Essex County. We've gathered community partners and co-chair the Essex County Heroin and Other (drugs) Prevention Coalition (known as ECHO). Local pharmacies can provide this medication to you through what is called a "standing order" - meaning you do not need an individual prescription for it. ALL Essex County pharmacies participate."

INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

Who's at Risk?

- People who have previously overdosed
- People who have had a period of abstinence from taking opioids, such as heroin and/or prescription pain relief medications
- People taking high doses of opioids
- People taking other substances with opioids



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- People taking opioids for a long period of time

Recognizing An Overdose

Recognizing an opioid overdose can be difficult. If you aren't sure, it is best to treat the situation like an overdose—you could save a life. Call 911 and seek medical care for the individual. Do not leave the person alone. Signs of an overdose may include:

- Falling asleep or loss of consciousness
- Slow, shallow breathing
- Choking or gurgling sounds
- Limp body
- Pale, blue, or cold skin

New York State's Good Samaritan Law allows people to call 911 without fear of arrest if they are having a drug overdose that requires emergency medical care or if they witness someone overdosing.

Essex County participates in the Narcan Emergency Box Initiative of the Adirondack Health Institute Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP). Narcan emergency boxes are wall mounted kits that contain two doses of the opioid overdose reversing medicine Naloxone, instructions for how to administer it, and a barrier mask to facilitate rescue breathing in the event of a suspected overdose. Naloxone, or Narcan, is a nasal spray. Narcan emergency boxes are intended for emergency use only.

The goal of the Narcan emergency box initiative is to install and maintain a network of Narcan emergency boxes in publicly accessible spaces in participating businesses in the North Country region. All Essex County buildings have Narcan emergency kits installed on the wall next to their AED's.

PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY:

- Using drugs while alone increases the risk of a fatal overdose. Never Use Alone (NUA) is a national confidential peer-led and peer-run organization that offers an anonymous 24/7/365 telephone hotline for people who use drugs while alone. Hotline operators are trained in substance use safety plans based on method of consumption, how to detect an adverse drug event and will contact local emergency medical services, when indicated. The hotline number is 800-484-3731.
- Fentanyl is an opioid 50-100 times more potent than heroin and morphine. Fentanyl is undetectable by sight, smell, or taste. It has been found mixed with other substances, which increases the risk of overdose and overdose death. Fentanyl test strips (FTS) can detect whether fentanyl is present in a substance or not, but cannot determine the quantity, purity, or type of fentanyl. FTS and other Harm Reduction Services are available from Alliance for Positive Health and their education team is available for resources and/or support if needed at 518.563-2437. Harm Reduction Services are used to reduce the number of drug overdoses and prevent spread of HIV, hepatitis C, and



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STIs. These services operate out of Plattsburgh and Glens Falls offices and serve Clinton, Franklin, Essex, Hamilton, Warren, and Washington counties.

ECHD has developed a Substance Use Directory that individuals and families can use to find area recovery and support resources. The directory is available [here](#):

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