



COUNTY OF KENOSHA

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News release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Medical examiner alerts community after 2 suspected overdose deaths within the past week

Kenosha County Medical Examiner Patrice Hall is reminding the community of the dangers of drug use following a pair of suspected overdose deaths last weekend.

These cases, both involving adults in the City of Kenosha, came just weeks after the Kenosha County Sheriff's Department reported responding to six, nonfatal overdose cases in a six-day period. There was also a third suspected overdose death earlier this month, Hall said.

“We saw an increase in overdoses in 2020 over 2019, and, unfortunately, this trend does not yet appear to be letting up,” Hall said. “While we’re awaiting toxicology results to determine the particulars of this past weekend’s cases, we know for sure that any use of illegal drugs and the misuse of prescription drugs can have deadly consequences.”

Toxicity deaths in Kenosha County totaled 49 in 2020, compared with 30 in 2019, 46 in 2018 and 57 in 2017, according to statistics compiled by the Medical Examiner's Office. Toxicity includes deaths due to abuse of any drugs, such as alcohol, cocaine, heroin, fentanyl, prescription medications, or a combination thereof.

In the cases of the six nonfatal overdose calls that the Sheriff's Department responded to from March 30 through April 4, some of the individuals reported they had consumed Xanax bars and Oxycodone pills, the department stated. All six of these individuals were not conscious or breathing when first responders arrived and were revived with Narcan, a medication used to counteract the effect of opioids.

Kenosha County Public Health offers Narcan training and free supplies of the medication to the public, through a grant from the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. More information about this

program is available at <https://www.kenoshacounty.org/1916/Narcan-Distribution-Program>, by calling 262-605-6741, or by sending an email to narcan@kenoshacounty.org.

Many other resources are also available to help people with a substance use disorder, Hall said. The Medical Examiner's Office in partnership with the Kenosha County Opioid Task Force has compiled information about these in "This Packet Could Save a Life," an envelope full of materials that is available in the lobby of the Kenosha County Public Safety Building and is often left behind by first responders at the scene of an overdose incident.

"The main thing we want people to know is that help is available," Hall said. "No life should be lost to substance use, and there are people, organizations and agencies in Kenosha County that are devoted to preventing these tragedies."

Hall noted that Vivent Health has free kits available to test substances for fentanyl, which is frequently seen in overdose deaths. Vivent Health-Kenosha can be reached at 262-657-6644.

Further information about prevention, treatment, and resources are listed below:

KNOW WHAT A SUSPECTED OVERDOSE LOOKS LIKE:

- Use the acronym **BLUE**:
 - **B (Breathing)**: The person is not breathing or breathing very slowly. They may be snoring or their breathing sounds like they are gurgling.
 - **L (Lips)**: Lips and fingertips are turning blue.
 - **U (Unresponsive)**: No response when you yell the person's name or rub the middle of their chest hard.
 - **E (Eyes)**: Center part of their eye is very small, also called "pinpoint pupil."
- **IF AN OVERDOSE IS SUSPECTED, GIVE NARCAN (if available) AND CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY.** You or someone you know will require follow-up medical attention.

TREATMENT/RESOURCES:

- The Mental Health and Substance Abuse Resource Center, available at 262-764-8555 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday, can help you find treatment and services that are right for you such as counseling, medication assisted treatment, or a 12-step program. Call the 24-hour Kenosha County Crisis Intervention Line 262-657-7188 for more immediate assistance.
- Professional Services Group provides the Comprehensive Alcohol and Drug Treatment Program at 262-654-1004
- Resource packets that include information sheets and pamphlets about opioids and related community agencies and programs may be picked up in the lobby at the Public Safety Building, 1000 55th St., Kenosha.
- The "A Way Out" program at local police departments in Lake County, Ill., is available to anyone with private insurance, regardless of their residency. This program fast-tracks drug users to substance abuse programs and services. More information is available at www.awayoutlc.org.

PREVENTION:

- **LOCK UP YOUR MEDICATIONS:** Keep track of quantity by regularly counting your tablets, in order to make sure they are being used as prescribed, and not misused.
- **DISPOSE OF UNUSED OR EXPIRED MEDICATION:** Kenosha County has six medication drop boxes located at all the police departments. Visit <http://www.kenoshacounty.org/314/MedicationNeedle-Disposal> to find the nearest location and collection hours.
- **DO NOT SHARE** your medications. Use only as prescribed.
- When pain control is needed, ask your medical provider, dentist, or veterinarian if an alternative treatment or medication is available.
- **TALK WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY ABOUT THE DANGERS OF OPIOID/OPIATE USE.** For information visit: <https://www.saveliveskenosha.org/>.

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