



COUNTY OF KENOSHA

John T. Jansen, Director
Department of Human Services

Patrice Hall, Medical Examiner
Office of the Medical Examiner
Kenosha County Public Safety Building
1000 55th Street
Kenosha, Wisconsin 53140
Phone: (262) 653-3869
Fax: (262) 653-3877

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Contact: Patrice Hall, Medical Examiner
262-653-3869

Medical Examiner's Office responds to recent wave of suspected overdose deaths

The Kenosha County Medical Examiner's Office has responded to four suspected overdose deaths since last week, Medical Examiner Patrice Hall announced today.

This latest wave of cases is a sad reminder of the danger of the use of illegal drugs and the misuse of prescription medications, Hall said.

"Unfortunately, this is not the first time this year that we've seen multiple suspected overdose deaths over the course of just a few days," Hall said. "Resources are available in our community to help people struggling with drug use, and I encourage people to access them for themselves or loved ones. It could save lives."

The recent wave includes two suspected overdose deaths in one night this week, and two cases over the past weekend.

Hall said the specific causes of these deaths will not be confirmed until toxicology results arrive.

These cases come as authorities locally and nationally continue to warn of the dangers of fentanyl, a powerful opioid that is turning up in many other drugs, including heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine, marijuana and counterfeit prescription pills.

Hall noted that using just a small amount of fentanyl can be deadly, and users often do not even realize it is in the substances they have obtained.

In 2021, 40 of the 53 toxicity deaths in Kenosha County involved the presence of fentanyl or a fentanyl analog, according to Medical Examiner's Office data.

While refraining from the use of illegal drugs and the misuse of prescriptions is a sure way to avoid overdose dangers, there are steps users can take to mitigate their risk, said Rebecca Dutter, Director of the Kenosha County Division of Aging, Disability and Behavioral Health Services.

“There’s a slogan that I ran across recently that says, ‘Some are not given the gift of recovery in time; fight for your life while you still have one,’” Dutter said.

“From Narcan training and fentanyl test strips to crisis counseling and support groups,” said Kari Foss, Kenosha County Behavioral Health Manager, “there are many resources available for users and the people around them.”

These include:

- **Narcan**, a life-saving medication that reverses the effects of an opioid overdose, is available at no cost from Kenosha County Public Health. 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.
- **Fentanyl test strips** are also available from Kenosha County Public Health and are offered to people who receive Narcan. The strips can be used to detect the presence of fentanyl in other substances. Strips may be picked up from 8:30 to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday at the Kenosha County Public Health Job Center Clinic, 8600 Sheridan Road, Kenosha. For more information, call 262-605-6775. They are also available from Vivent Health-Kenosha, which may be reached at 262-657-6644 or online at <https://viventhealth.org/locations/kenosha/>.
- **The Kenosha County Mental Health and Substance Abuse Resource Center**, which links people with substance use disorder resources, may be reached from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday at 262-764-8555.
- **The Kenosha County Crisis Hotline**, operated by Kenosha Human Development Services, is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, at 262-657-7188.
- More information about other drug prevention and recovery programs and resources is available at <https://www.kenoshacounty.org/1844/Drug-Prevention-Programs> and <https://www.saveliveskenosha.org>.

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