



COUNTY OF KENOSHA

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News release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Medical examiner alerts community after 3 suspected overdose deaths in less than a week

A string of suspected fatal overdoses in recent days is an unfortunate reminder of the dangers of drug use, Kenosha County Medical Examiner Patrice Hall said today.

The Medical Examiner's Office has handled three suspected overdose cases since Tuesday, May 5, Hall said. Two were in the City of Kenosha; one was in Twin Lakes.

"During these unprecedented times, resources are still available to help a person with a substance use disorder," Hall said. "These resources can be found in the 'This Packet Could Save a Life' packet available in the lobby Kenosha County Public Safety Building or by calling the Kenosha Human Development Services at 262-657-7188."

These recent deaths come as the Kenosha Fire Department has seen an uptick in the number of overdose calls.

City EMS personnel have responded to 12 opioid-related overdoses since May 1, including the two fatal cases, said Jim Poltrock, Emergency Medical Services Division chief. Six of the 12 calls were on Saturday, May 9.

"KFD remains prepared during the COVID-19 pandemic to care for all patients who need us," Poltrock said.

Poltrock said seven of the 12 cases involved men in an age range of 28 to 50 (average age, 37). Five of the 12 were women in an age range of 29 to 51 (average age, 39).

Nine of these individuals received Narcan from EMS personnel; two were revived with Narcan prior to EMS arrival.

Narcan is an emergency medication administered nasally to reverse the effects of an opioid overdose. It is available for free from the Kenosha County Division of Health under a grant that the county received from the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Training is required to receive Narcan. While in-person sessions are currently canceled due to the COVID-19 emergency, online training is available. Call 262-605-6741 or send an email to narcan@kenoshacounty.org to schedule a date and time.

Hall noted that Peer Support Specialists are available through KHDS to work with those struggling with drug addiction, and 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; during the COVID-19 emergency, the office is only open 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Fridays.

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 Kenosha County Opioid Task Force holds its meetings, which are open to the public, at 10 a.m. the second Tuesday of each month at the Kenosha County Job Center, 8600 Sheridan Road, Kenosha. More information is at <http://www.kenoshacounty.org/1917/Opioid-Task-Force>. (Note: Meetings are currently canceled until further notice due to the COVID-19 emergency.)
- The Mental Health and Substance Abuse Resource Center can help you find treatment and services that are right for you such as counseling, medication assisted treatment, or a 12-step program. Call 262-657-7188 for more information.
- Narcotics Anonymous at 262-653-9800
- Heroin Anonymous/Southport Recovery Club at 262-552-6879
- Comprehensive Alcohol and Drug Treatment Program at 262-654-1004
- Recovery Coaches at 262-652-9830 or 262-658-8166
- Resource packets that include information sheets and pamphlets about opioids and related community agencies and programs may be picked up at the Division of Health, 8600 Sheridan Road, Kenosha, and 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.
 - The Kenosha County Division of Health provides medication lockboxes, free of charge, to all members of the community who feel they could benefit from having them in their home. Call 262-605-6700 for more information.
- **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/>.

For more information, please call the Kenosha County Division of Health at 262-605-6700 or visit <http://www.kenoshacounty.org/>.

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