



COUNTY OF KENOSHA

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Medical Examiner's Office sees another round of suspected overdose deaths in Kenosha County

Kenosha County Medical Examiner Patrice Hall is reporting another unfortunate string of suspected overdose deaths in the community.

Hall today said her office has responded to three such cases over the last week, including two on consecutive days. All were within the City of Kenosha, she said.

Further details about the cases — including whether fentanyl was involved — will not be known until toxicology findings become available, Hall said.

“These deaths are another sad reminder of the dangers of using illegal drugs and counterfeit prescription medications,” Hall said. “We do not know for certain whether fentanyl was involved in these cases, but we do know that it is an extremely dangerous, deadly substance that we continue to see mixed in with all sorts of other illegal substances.”

Hall said while the safest measure is to abstain from illegal drug use, she said those who use should obtain fentanyl test strips. These can be used to detect the presence of fentanyl in other substances, so users can be aware of what they are consuming.

As the effects of the opioid epidemic continue to be felt locally and nationwide, Kenosha County Public Health is working on a collaborative initiative to prevent overdoses, said Health Officer Jen Freiheit.

The Kenosha Overdose Response Initiative (KORI) is a partnership between Kenosha County Public Health, Kenosha Fire Department Emergency Medical Services and peer support specialists from Oakwood Clinical Associates.

Funded by a grant from the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, KORI is now in a pilot phase and will be ramped up during the first half of 2023, Freiheit said.

Once fully established, Freiheit said the KORl team will meet overdose survivors where they are, offering support and guidance as desired to meet their needs. Overdose survivors and their families and friends will also be linked to appropriate education about available treatment services such as counseling, preventative care, and medication-assisted treatment.

“The goal is to establish processes, protocols and mechanisms for referral to appropriate holistic support services and education, connecting participants with substance use disorder to long-term treatment and recovery,” Freiheit said.

Hall reiterated that it is important to remember that help is available for people with substance use disorder, and that recovery is possible.

“There are many resources available in the community for those struggling with substance use, and I strongly encourage people to access them,” Hall said. “Lives can be saved.”

Locally, these resources 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://bit.ly/KCNarcan>, 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. Strips may be picked up from 8:30 to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday at Kenosha County Public Health’s 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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