

HEALing Communities Study

Cayuga County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

6/30/20

Narcan community distribution events planned before holiday weekend

The Cayuga County HEALing Communities Study has been closely monitoring opioid overdoses and the numbers remain concerning. Law enforcement agencies have reported 91 overdoses since January and 12 of them have been fatal. These number do not include June data from the New York State Police. 9 of these overdoses have been confirmed by the Coroner to be opioid-related. The toxicology reports on the other cases are still outstanding. This marks a stark contrast to 2019 when Cayuga County ended the year with a total of 9 fatal overdoses.

Holiday weekends are usually a cause for joy and not concern. Even though this 4th of July will be very different for most of us, for people suffering from substance use disorder, holidays are often filled with triggers that may lead to excessive use and sometimes death. Having been socially isolated due to the pandemic over the past three months only makes matters worse for an already vulnerable population. Members of the Cayuga County HEALing Communities Study are concerned the recent spike in opioid overdoses may continue over the holiday weekend and they are ready to go to the streets to save lives.

In a last-minute effort to get the opioid overdose-reversing, potentially life-saving Narcan nasal spray into the hands of people at risk, the committee has organized Narcan distribution pop-up events at locations throughout the City of Auburn that have been especially hard hit during the opioid epidemic. 120 Narcan kits are available for distribution, courtesy of the Drug Free Community Coalition, the Sheriff's Office, and the Community Mental Health Center. Participants will be trained by watching a short Narcan training video and provided a free Narcan kit along with other resource materials. Nick's Ride 4 Friends will have peers at each location to support the initiative.

The distribution events are planned as follows (weather permitting and as long as supplies last):

Wednesday, July 1st from 12 – 4 pm

- Nick's Ride 4 Friends, 12 South Street
- AME Zion Church, 90 Franklin Street

Thursday, July 2nd from 2 – 6 pm

- Dom's Grocery, 30 Orchard Street
- Tay's All American Variety Store, 161 State Street

We thank the participating businesses, organizations, and volunteers for their support to make this happen on such short notice.

COVID-19 social distancing and safety guidelines will be followed at these events. Volunteers will wear masks and cloth masks are available for participants who don't have one. Hand sanitizer is available and disinfecting wipes will be used to wipe down devices and pens after each use.

“We urge people who are concerned about a family member or friend overdosing from opioids to come out and get Narcan so they are able to respond in an overdose emergency,” says Monika Salvage, Project Director for the Cayuga County HEALing Communities Study, “It’s the best chance to save their lives and it gives them another chance to seek help.”

About the HEALing Communities Study

The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) estimates that 2.1 million Americans have OUD, yet fewer than 20% of those individuals receive specialty care in a given year. A menu of evidence-based practices (EBPs) exists, including opioid overdose education and naloxone distribution programs, prescription drug monitoring programs, FDA-approved medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD), behavioral therapies, and recovery support services. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) launched the HEALing Communities Study (HCS) to investigate and identify the EBPs for preventing and treating OUD that are most effective at the local level. The goal of the study is to reduce opioid-related overdose deaths by 40 percent over the course of three years.