

Someone overdoses in Cayuga County almost every day. Close to 100 overdoses have been reported since the beginning of this year. More than one-third were suspected to involve opioids. We have lost 6 lives so far this year. Fatal overdoses almost always involve opioids, more than one substance, and the synthetic and very deadly opioid fentanyl. In 2020, 40% of overdose deaths were linked to cocaine, mostly in combination with fentanyl. The HEALing Communities team is ramping up efforts to distribute Narcan nasal spray through in-person events, starting in Auburn next week. COVID-19 precautions (masks, social distancing, hand sanitizer) will be observed.

- May 4, 1-5 pm at the Rescue Mission/Melone Village, 51 Merriman Street, Auburn
- May 19, 1-5 pm at Brogan Manor, 37 Olympia Avenue, Auburn
- May 25, 1-5 pm at Oak Creek Townhomes, 101 Quill Avenue, Auburn

Narcan can reverse the effects of an opioid overdose and save someone's life. Anyone can and should administer this nasal spray if they suspect any type of overdose. If no opioids were involved, Narcan will not harm the person, it just won't have any effect. Since we know that many substances are now mixed with fentanyl, often without the user's knowledge, it is even more important that people don't use alone and have someone nearby who carries Narcan. Narcan reverses the effects of fentanyl, but since it is 50-100 times stronger than heroin, even small amounts can lead to an overdose. It may require multiple doses of Narcan to revive a person, which makes it crucial to call 911 when you witness an overdose, even after you started administering Narcan. The Good Samaritan Law protects you when you call 911 when you see or experience a drug overdose.

The HEALing Communities team continues to analyze overdose data throughout the county to identify neighborhoods and areas that are especially hard hit. Based on this overdose mapping and in partnership with neighborhood stores, businesses, and community agencies, we meet people where they are, offer Narcan training, and send them home with a Narcan kit containing two doses and information about local addiction treatment and recovery services. Last year, HEALing organized seven events at overdose hotspots and distributed 218 Narcan kits to training participants and subsequently, overdose witnesses saved 29 lives with Narcan.

In May, we are expanding our intentional outreach efforts in collaboration with the Rescue Mission, Auburn Housing Authority, and Home Leasing LLC. Together with our partners from the Cayuga County Mental Health Center, Nick's Ride 4 Friends, and Drug Free Community Coalition, we aim to create a stigma-free and safe environment for people to engage and learn about how they can protect themselves and others in case of an opioid overdose emergency.

Cayuga County residents can also request a free Narcan kit to be mailed to their home at www.cayugacounty.us/narcan. If someone has used their Narcan, they can request a replenishment kit on the same page. We can all be first responders by carrying and administering Narcan and give people suffering from opioid use disorder another chance to seek help and start their recovery journey. It could be a family member, friend, or co-worker. Remember, the only thing you cannot recover from is death.

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.