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ALERT

HEALING CAYUGA

Healing Cayuga: The different faces behind overdoses

Monika Salvage Special to The Citizen

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Provided

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Not every person who overdoses is struggling with addiction. Not every overdose stems from illegal drugs. Not everyone who dies from an overdose has a substance use disorder. Overdose victims range from teenagers up to the aging population, they are female and male, they reside in cities and rural areas, they have a home and are transient. The cause of their overdoses ranges from over-the-counter pills to deadly cocktails involving several legal and illegal substances. There is no one type of overdose victim and no single reason why they are overdosing. All this is true for Cayuga County. All this we need to remember when we continue our work to reduce overdoses and address the underlying causes and traumas that have led to individuals using and misusing substances.

Aug. 31 is Overdose Awareness Day

We are approaching the International Overdose Awareness Day that has been recognized annually on Aug. 31 to raise awareness of overdoses and reduce the stigma of drug-related deaths. While the Healing Cayuga team and community partners are focused on overdoses and recovery year-round, it is a day to remember and grieve for those we have lost and express our continued commitment to ending overdoses and drug-related deaths. We must remember them as individuals whose potential we have lost forever. The affected families and friends in our community are painfully aware of the grief and hurt overdoses cause in their own lives and in those around them. Overdose deaths create ripple effects of shock and despair in families, neighborhoods, villages and towns, and the recovery and treatment communities at large. We must continue to talk about substance misuse and work to reduce the stigma around it, so people who are struggling are not ashamed to seek help and treatment. A brochure on the stigma associated with addiction and how our words can have a positive or negative impact on people who are struggling can be viewed and downloaded at cayugacounty.us/1705/Stigma.

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What you can do

In Cayuga County, overdose numbers are still high, but they are trending down this year. Thankfully, overdose deaths are down as well. But July has been a concerning month, with a high number of overdoses, especially outside of Auburn, and two overdose-related fatalities. This is a reminder that substance misuse is happening in rural areas as well, and it is important that individuals are equipped with tools that help them respond to an overdose while they wait until first responders arrive. Narcan nasal spray is a tool that can bring people back from an overdose that involves opioids. Since much of the drug supply on the street and Internet is laced with fentanyl, a synthetic and potent opioid (often without the knowledge of the user), overdose witnesses have a crucial role in providing first aid with Narcan and are protected by the Good Samaritan Law if they do so.

How to get trained on Narcan

Anyone can get Narcan-trained on the Cayuga County website at cayugacounty.us/narcan and request a free kit to be mailed to them.

We also have an in-person training coming up from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 20, at Dunkin' on East Genesee Street in Auburn. Stop by and learn how to recognize an overdose, get trained on how to use Narcan, and pick up a free kit along with recovery resources. There will be pizza from Emilio's Pizza and you can win gift certificates from several local businesses, such as Mom's Tattoo, Hairlooms Salon, Flawless Cuts and Graceful Lashes. Thank you to all the participating businesses and the manager at Dunkin', who continues to be a great partner in raising awareness and helping people get access to Narcan.

Know about local resources

To create community-wide awareness of local recovery resources, Healing Cayuga is sharing a public service announcement featuring a local peer, a person in recovery and a health care provider. The message for people who are struggling with addiction and their loved ones is that help is available when they are ready to reach out.

To watch the 30-second PSA, "Recovery Support in Cayuga County," visit youtu.be/XievgMTBfs8.

The full videos, about a personal recovery story, the work of peer advocates, and how medications can help with opioid use disorder, can be viewed on the Healing Cayuga YouTube channel at youtube.com/playlist?list=PLMpEjf1N2P5G88NiZNPzHObOJLQ87Kcb_.

HEALing Cayuga - Recovery Support in Cayuga County 30 s...



Monika Salvage works for the Cayuga County Mental Health Department as the project director for Healing Cayuga, formerly the HEALing Communities Study, a multi-year, multi-state research study to reduce opioid overdose deaths through the implementation of evidence-based practices. If you are interested in learning more, or getting involved, call (315) 253-1522 or email msalvage@cayugacounty.us.

