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Honor lost loved ones and work toward ending overdose on International Overdose Awareness Day

Community encouraged to attend free Narcan training Aug. 28 in Eau Claire

Eau Claire, WI – August 20, 2024 – Communities in Eau Claire County and around the world are coming together this month to remember the loved ones we've lost to overdose and acknowledge the grief of the family and friends left behind.

Observed on August 31 each year, International Overdose Awareness Day seeks to create a better understanding of overdose, reduce the stigma of drug-related deaths, and reduce the harms associated with drug use.

Community members can help prevent fatal overdoses by getting trained to administer Narcan (naloxone), a medication that can reverse an opioid overdose. **The public is invited to a free Narcan training and opioid workshop on Wednesday, August 28 from 5:30-7 p.m. at the Community Table, 320 Putnam St., Eau Claire.**

At the workshop, you'll learn about opioids, about fentanyl and fentanyl test strips, how to respond to an overdose, how to safely store opioid medication, and how to use Narcan nasal spray. The workshop is free and open to all. To register, visit bit.ly/opioidworkshopaug2024. Register by Tuesday, August 27. Snacks and beverages will be provided.

U.S. overdose rates have risen in recent years. In 2022, there were 1,464 opioid-related deaths in Wisconsin, according to Wisconsin Department of Health Services data.

Overdose has also deeply impacted the Eau Claire County community. Between 2018-2023, there were 100 drug overdose deaths in Eau Claire County, 78 of which were related to opioids. During that same period, there were 584 suspected non-fatal opioid overdoses that happened in the county, according to the Wisconsin Ambulance Run Data System.

"In addition to honoring and remembering the loved ones we've lost, we stand together to say that more needs to be done to end overdose in our community," says Sarah Dillivan-Pospisil, public health specialist at the Eau Claire City-County Health Department. "Learning how to

prevent overdoses by safely storing and disposing of medications – and learning how to use tools like Narcan – is a meaningful way to honor those who are deeply impacted by overdose.”

Here are some ways that you can help prevent an overdose:

- **Pick up free Narcan nasal spray and fentanyl test strips** from the harm reduction vending machine, located in the lobby of the Eau Claire County Jail (710 2nd Ave., Eau Claire). The repurposed vending machine, a collaboration between the Health Department and the Eau Claire County Sheriff’s Office, offers free Narcan and fentanyl test strips to the public seven days a week, 24 hours a day. Anyone can use the vending machine at any time of day, no questions asked. [Get more information here.](#)
- **Use a lockbox, lock bag, or locked drawer** to keep your prescription medication safe and out of sight. Stop by the health department to pick up a free medication lockbox while supplies last.
- **Dispose of your unused or expired medication** at one of the [permanent drop-off locations](#) in Eau Claire County, or use a medication deactivation system.
- **Find support groups and treatment resources** available in the Chippewa Valley by clicking [here](#).
- **Learn more about a local support program** for family and friends whose loved ones struggle with addiction by clicking [here](#).

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This August, keep an eye out for bus ads on Eau Claire Transit vehicles with information about the self-serve harm reduction vending machine, located in the Eau Claire County Jail lobby.