

Local Community Partners Helping to Prevent Deaths from Overdose

August 31st, 2015 is International Overdose Awareness Day.

It is a day that aims to raise awareness of overdose and reduce the stigma associated with drug related deaths all the while acknowledging the grief felt by families and friends of those who have died due to overdoses.

In 2013, 625 individuals across the province of Ontario died due to Opioid Overdoses, 1 person every 14 hours¹. There are now more people killed from opioid overdose in Ontario than people killed in motor vehicle collisions². The province of Ontario is the highest consumer of Opioids in Canada³. The growing concerns and alarming rise in opioid overdoses (463% from 2000-2013⁴) are affecting all communities from the largest cities to the smallest towns and villages, including Leeds, Grenville and Lanark. With several deaths over the past 18 months here in the Tri County area, the Health Unit, along with community partners are working diligently to raise awareness about overdoses happening in our community.

One of the many calls for action to improve opioid safety and reduce the number of fatal overdoses happening in the province is to expand the access to the lifesaving drug Naloxone. Naloxone is recommended by the World Health Organization as an essential medicine that (temporarily) reverses an opioid overdose⁵. Like epinephrine (e.g., EpiPen); it is a proven lifesaver during a medical emergency⁶.

The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark Health Unit now offers Naloxone kits to eligible individuals through the Revive Overdose Response program. Revive is offered at all 6 sites of the Health unit by appointment and drop in basis. Since the rollout of Revive, 47 Naloxone kits have been dispensed with 4 opioid overdoses prevented in our community.

For more information about the Revive Overdose response program, visit <http://www.healthunit.org/harmreduction/revive.html> or follow LGLHealthunit on Facebook or Twitter or call the Health Action Line at 1-800-660-5853.

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¹ Prescription for Life: Reducing Opioid Overdose Deaths in Ontario 2015

² Preliminary Numbers Released by the Ontario Coroner's Office, 2013

³ The Way Forward Stewardship Report

⁴ Prescription for Life: Reducing Opioid Overdose Deaths in Ontario 2015

⁵ Prescription for Life: Reducing Opioid Overdose Deaths in Ontario 2015

⁶ Prescription for Life: Reducing Opioid Overdose Deaths in Ontario 2015