

**Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District
Health Unit
MEDIA RELEASE**

Aug 31, 2017



August 31st is International Overdose Awareness Day

On this day we **raise awareness** of overdose and work towards reducing the stigma of a drug-related death. It is important to address the stigma around addictions to help support the needs of our community as it relates to opioid challenges. The Community Harm Reduction Steering Committee in Leeds Grenville & Lanark has created a local opioid response plan to address the community needs around opioids.

In October 2016, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care released a comprehensive *Strategy to Prevent Opioid Addiction and Overdose*. From the opioid strategy, it was announced on June 12, 2017, that funding will be provided to Public Health Units to enhance harm reduction programs and services and improve local opioid response capacity and initiatives. This will build on programs and services already offered by Public Health Units and community partners. This enhancement will address areas that the steering committee has identified as priorities. This will include, local opioid response, naloxone distribution and training, and early warning and surveillance.

The Revive Overdose Response Program, through the Health Unit, currently distributes Narcan (Naloxone) nasal spray kits to eligible clients. The enhancement will allow eligible community based agencies to distribute naloxone. Over the next few weeks the Health Unit will be reaching out to identify eligible community based agencies who would like to participate in training and distribution of Naloxone kits.

On International Overdose Awareness Day this year, please help spread the message that drug related deaths are preventable as we work together as a community to address opioid overdoses.

For more information call the Health Action Line 1-800-660-5853 or visit <http://www.healthunit.org/harmreduction/>. You can also connect with LGLHealthunit on Facebook and Twitter.

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