



ONEIDA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

ANTHONY J. PICENTE, JR
ONEIDA COUNTY EXECUTIVE

PHYLLIS D. ELLIS, BSN, MS, FACHE
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH



"PROMOTING & PROTECTING THE HEALTH OF ONEIDA COUNTY"

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For Immediate Release

Contact: Megan Graziano, 315-798-5229

Overdose Response Team Issues Precautions to Reduce Overdose Risks During Holidays

The Oneida County Overdose Response Team (ORT) is reminding people who use drugs, friends and family members that a holiday period can lead to an increased risk of overdose.

"For most people, the holidays bring joy and excitement. However, for individuals actively using drugs or in recovery, the potential for family conflict, loneliness, grief, financial strain and other factors can produce a large amount of stress that may increase chances of an overdose," said Oneida County Public Health Director Phyllis Ellis.

In the past seven days the Overdose Detection Mapping Application has identified 11 overdoses, four of which were fatalities. There have been eight total fatalities in the past 27 days.

Individuals affected may seek drug and alcohol use as a coping method to temporarily relieve stress. Once a person has been drug-free for a period of time — for treatment or otherwise — if they relapse, they're more susceptible to overdose simply because their tolerance isn't what it once was. A dose they may have once used regularly can now be fatal.

While there is no safe way to use illegal drugs, it is important that everyone is aware of steps they can take to help reduce the risk of overdose death. Safety recommendations for people who use drugs include:

1. Call 2-1-1 or text 898-211 for crisis, treatment and Narcan resources.
2. Have Narcan available, and someone who can administer it, in case of an overdose.
3. Do not use drugs containing fentanyl. Fentanyl testing strips are available at ACR Health Syringe Exchange Program at 315-793-0661
4. Do not use drugs alone.
5. Do not share needles.
6. In the event of an overdose, call 911 immediately. Even if Narcan is available, it may require multiple doses to reverse an overdose.

We encourage the community to find out how to detect signs of substance abuse and overdose, and learn what to do when encountering a person who may be having an adverse reaction to a drug. Disorientation, unresponsiveness, slowed or difficulty in breathing, blue or gray fingertips, gurgling or snoring sounds and vomiting can be signs of overdose and should not be ignored. Family and friends of persons at risk of a drug overdose or those using opioids should carry Narcan (Naloxone).

ADMINISTRATION

ADIRONDACK BANK BLDG., 5TH FL.,
185 GENESEE ST. UTICA, NY 13501
TEL: (315) 798-6400 • FAX: (315) 266-6138

SPECIAL CHILDREN SERVICES

ADIRONDACK BANK BLDG. 5TH FL.,
185 GENESEE ST. UTICA, NY 13501
TEL: (315) 798-5249 • FAX: (315) 731-3491

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

ADIRONDACK BANK BLDG., 4TH FL.,
185 GENESEE ST. UTICA, NY 13501
TEL: (315) 798-5064 • FAX: (315) 798-6486

CLINICAL SERVICES

406 ELIZABETH ST. UTICA, NY 13501
TEL: (315) 798-5748 • FAX: (315) 798-1057