



**SARATOGA COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

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Commissioner

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**PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY:
RECENT INCREASE IN DRUG OVERDOSES**

SUMMARY

Saratoga County Department of Health's (SCDOH) Substance Use Surveillance System has identified an increase in drug-related overdoses between April 18th and April 24th. During this seven-day period, 19 overdoses were reported, of which 3 were fatal.

- The average age of these cases is 33.5 years, and the age range is 13 to 73 years.
- 50% of cases are male.
- 100% of overdose fatalities were identified in the Village of Ballston Spa, with an additional non-fatal overdose identified in zip code 12020.

While laboratory results are not complete for each of the cases, opioids are confirmed or suspected to be the cause in the majority of the cases. While the epidemiological investigation is ongoing, at present, links have been identified among two of the fatal overdose cases.

INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

Recognizing an opioid overdose can be difficult. If you aren't sure, it is best to treat the situation like an overdose—you could save a life. Call 911 and seek medical care for the individual. Do not leave the person alone. Signs of an overdose may include:

- Small, constricted "pinpoint pupils"
- Falling asleep or loss of consciousness
- Slow, shallow breathing
- Choking or gurgling sounds
- Limp body
- Pale, blue, or cold skin

[New York State's Good Samaritan Law](#) allows people to call 911 without fear of arrest if they are having a drug overdose that requires emergency medical care or if they witness someone overdosing.

Naloxone Overdose Rescue Kits

Naloxone (Narcan®) is a safe medication that can save someone's life by reversing the effects of an opioid overdose. It only works on opioids, such as heroin, prescription pain medications and fentanyl, but it is safe to use even if opioids are not present. Persons who use drugs should have naloxone on hand. 911 should also be called after using naloxone.

In partnership with Village of Ballston Spa and Healing Springs Recovery Community and Outreach Center, SCDOH will be distributing naloxone on the following dates:

- Wednesday, April 26th from 2:00pm to 4:00pm at 40 McMaster Street, Ballston Spa
- Thursday, April 27th from 11:00am to 3:00pm at 40 McMaster Street, Ballston Spa
- Friday, April 28th from 8:30am to 3:30pm at 6012 County Farm Road, Ballston Spa

The distribution events are free, open to the public and training will be provided. Residents who are unable to attend the distribution can register to obtain an Overdose Rescue Kit [here](#).

Other Harm Reduction Resources

- Using drugs while alone increases the risk of a fatal overdose. Never Use Alone (NUA) is a national confidential peer-led and peer-run organization that offers an anonymous 24/7/365 telephone hotline for people who use drugs while alone. Hotline operators are trained in substance use safety plans based on method of consumption, how to detect an adverse drug event and will contact local emergency medical services, when indicated. The hotline number is 800- 484-3731.
- Fentanyl is an opioid 50-100 times more potent than heroin and morphine. Pharmaceutically manufactured fentanyl is used medically; however, illicitly manufactured fentanyl and its analogues have become increasingly common in the unregulated drug supply. Fentanyl is undetectable by sight, smell, or taste. It has been found mixed with other substances, which increases the risk of overdose and overdose death. Fentanyl test strips (FTS) have demonstrated utility in detecting whether fentanyl is present in a substance or not, but cannot determine the quantity, purity, or type of fentanyl. In partnership with Healing Springs Recovery Community and Outreach Center, FTS will be available at the Narcan Distribution Event while supplies last. FTS may also be available from local and regional [drug user health hubs](#).

Treatment and Recovery Resources

- The most effective approach to addiction treatment is person-centered and completely individualized. New York State's Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) certifies recovery and treatment programs at various levels of care, from outpatient counseling services to residential or bedded care for those who need it. Rather than simply treating the disease of addiction, certified programs treat the individual living with addiction and offer support to their loved ones. Individuals can learn more about the different types of treatment or find a recovery program [here](#).
- SCDOH and Saratoga County Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services have also developed a Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Resource Guide that individuals and families can use to find area recovery and support resources. The guide is available [here](#).

Educational Materials and Additional Resources

[SAMHSA Publications and Digital Resources](#)

[Naloxone Co-Payment Assistance Program \(N-CAP\)](#)

[Healing Springs Recovery and Outreach Center](#): (518) 306-3048

[Saratoga County Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services](#): (518) 584-9030

[NYS HOPEline](#): 1-877-8-HOPENY (467369) or text HOPENY (467369), toll-free, confidential, available 24/7

Alcoholics Anonymous: [Find a meeting](#)

Narcotics Anonymous: [Find a meeting](#)

If you have questions about the information in this advisory, please email opioids@saratogacountyny.gov.