



KALAMAZOO COUNTY GOVERNMENT

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NEWS RELEASE
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International Overdose Awareness Day on August 31

KALAMAZOO, MI— On August 31, Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department will observe International Overdose Awareness Day; a day intended to raise awareness of overdoses and reduce the stigma of drug-related deaths.

The Kalamazoo County Opioid Coalition is coordinating with the Calhoun County Opioid Coalition through social media outreach by taking part in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [Rx Awareness Campaign](#). Overdose deaths are preventable. The Rx Awareness Campaign highlights the risks of prescription opioids, such as addiction and overdose, and shares personal stories of those affected.



Dr. William Nettleton, Medical Director for Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department, notes, "Addiction is not a moral defect. It is a long-term, relapsing and all-too-often deadly disease of the brain that affects not only the lives of addicted individuals – but their families and relationships as well."

Like many parts of the nation, Kalamazoo County's opioid overdose epidemic is increasingly driven by illegally manufactured fentanyl. Illegal fentanyl is a powerful opioid that makes a deadly overdose more likely. To reduce fentanyl-related deaths, more robust overdose prevention and addiction treatment efforts are needed. "Increased medication-assisted treatment is necessary to reduce the tide of fentanyl-related deaths," states Dr. Nettleton.

Naloxone is a drug that can reverse the effects of an opioid and prevent a deadly overdose. Naloxone is covered by Medicaid and many other insurances and is available without a prescription at the following pharmacies listed on the [MDHHS website](#).

Naloxone kits are also available through the Southwest Michigan Chapter of FAN (Families Against Narcotics) at 269-580-8290.

HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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The Kalamazoo County Opioid Coalition utilizes a public health approach to address the opioid epidemic and includes substance abuse treatment providers, medical providers, persons in recovery, law enforcement, social services, concerned families and prevention agencies across Kalamazoo County.

For more information on opioids and resources for patients, families, prescribers, pharmacists and communities visit: http://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-71550_2941_4871_79584---,00.html

International Overdose Awareness Day website: <https://www.overdoseday.com/>

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Kalamazoo County Government
Health & Community Services Department

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