



**KALAMAZOO
COUNTY GOVERNMENT**
Health & Community Services Department

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SHERIFF CONTACT:
Michelle Greenlee,
Undersheriff
269-385-6176
mmgree@kalcounty.com

HCS CONTACT:
Christina Anthony &
Matt Johnson, PIOs
pio@kalcounty.com

Kalamazoo County's Public Health Vending Machine Delivers Life-Saving Narcan and Other Critical Supplies

KALAMAZOO, Mich. – As part of an innovative harm-reduction strategy, the Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Office, in partnership with the Health & Community Services Department, has installed a public health vending machine offering life-saving supplies free of charge at 1421 Healy St. in Kalamazoo, where the Sheriff's Office of Community Corrections and Michigan Department of Corrections – Probation and Parole offices are located.

Since its launch in June, the vending machine has already distributed **242 Narcan kits, 222 fentanyl/xylazine test kits, 326 safe sex kits, 456 female hygiene kits, 212 male hygiene kits, and 32 gun locks**—a testament to its role in protecting and empowering the community.

"The inclusion of Narcan, a brand of naloxone, is especially important as it can rapidly reverse an opioid overdose, potentially saving lives," said Sheriff Rick Fuller. "This is the second machine stocked with Narcan we have placed, with the first being at the jail exit, so it is readily available as inmates transition back into the community."

In addition to Narcan, the vending machine provides fentanyl and xylazine test kits, which help individuals detect dangerous substances before use, potentially avoiding fatal overdoses. Fuller explained, "The test strips will also afford those struggling with substance use disorder the opportunity to avoid bad batches of drugs."

This initiative is a direct response to the ongoing opioid epidemic. According to the 2023 Medical Examiner's Annual Report, a staggering 74% of drug-related deaths in Kalamazoo County involved opioids. In April 2023, [the community faced a deadly overdose cluster linked to fentanyl-laced cocaine](#), resulting in 18 overdose cases, including 10 hospitalizations and seven tragic deaths.

"This statistic highlights the urgent need for harm reduction strategies, like this innovative vending machine, making critical public health tools accessible to those in need," said Jim Rutherford, Health Officer for the Health & Community Services Department. "Our goal is to empower individuals with the resources and knowledge needed to navigate this crisis safely."

While the best way to avoid the risk of overdose is not to use drugs, people who do use or are experiencing substance use disorder can reduce the risk of fatal overdose by following these tips:

- **Keep naloxone readily available on you and at home.** Naloxone can help reverse an opioid overdose and can be obtained through the vending machine, the COPE Network at 269-580-8290, and Kalamazoo Harm Reduction at 269-568-3658 or 269-568-3182.
- **Consider using fentanyl test strips before using any substance.** A rapid onset of overdose can occur with exposure to fentanyl, particularly in individuals who do not know whether fentanyl is present or do not have a history of using opioids such as fentanyl.
- **Never use drugs alone.** Make sure a designated person who has not taken drugs is available to administer naloxone or call for emergency assistance.

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