

Why Opioid Overdose Prevention Matters



Understanding Opioids in the Bigger Picture

Many substances can harm health and safety, including alcohol, nicotine, cannabis, stimulants, sedatives, and opioids. Opioids include prescription pain medicines, heroin, and fentanyl, and they are a critical public health issue because they can slow or stop breathing. Fentanyl can make overdose deaths more likely, and compared with many other substances, opioid overdoses can become fatal quickly, even in very small amounts.



Alcohol

Can impair judgment and increase risk of injury.



Nicotine

Can harm the heart, lungs, and overall health.



Cannabis

Can affect attention, learning, coordination, and driving.



Stimulants

Can increase heart rate, blood pressure, and risk of overdose.



Sedatives

Can slow the brain and breathing, especially when mixed with other substances.



Opioids

Can slow or stop breathing, and overdose can be fatal quickly, even in small amounts.

A Serious and Growing Impact

- Since 2015, over 12,000 unintentional drug overdose deaths have occurred in Connecticut, with illicit opioids identified as the principal cause.
- Opioid overdose is a leading cause of injury death in Connecticut.
- Fentanyl and other synthetic opioids are driving most overdose deaths.

Every loss is a neighbor, coworker, friend, or family member.

A Heavy Toll on Communities

- Opioid overdose strains emergency response, hospitals, schools, and social services.
- It increases costs for healthcare, criminal justice, and child welfare systems.
- It affects local economies through lost productivity, absenteeism, and reduced workforce participation.

It is not just a health issue—it is a community and economic issue.

Opioids Are Stronger Than Ever

- Illicit opioids today can be as much as **100 times stronger** than heroin.
- Counterfeit pills and powders often contain fentanyl that cannot be seen, tasted, or smelled.
- One pill or a small amount can be deadly.
- Illicit opioids may contain other toxic substances.

The risk is real. Anyone can be exposed.

When municipalities invest in **opioid overdose prevention**, they protect lives, strengthen families, and advance their mission to keep residents healthy and safe.



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Communities Already Have Tools That Work

Local communities do not have to start from scratch. State and local resources can strengthen and expand prevention strategies that are already underway. When municipal leaders, community partners, and state resources work together, communities can prevent overdose, connect people to care, and keep residents safe.

Opioid Settlement Funds

Settlement funds can support a wide range of evidence-based strategies, from prevention to recovery. Municipal leaders can use these funds to strengthen local response efforts.

Local Prevention Councils

Community-driven councils bring partners together to assess needs, coordinate resources, and take action that fits local priorities.

Prevention Resource Partners

Statewide and regional partners provide data, training, technical assistance, and proven strategies to help communities succeed.

Local Community-Based Efforts

Municipalities and local partners are already using many prevention strategies in neighborhoods, schools, healthcare settings, and public safety systems.

Strategies Already Underway in Communities



NA Meetings and Peer Support

Peer support groups create connection, reduce isolation, and help people stay engaged in recovery.



Community Outreach

Trusted outreach workers meet people where they are, share information, and connect them to services.



Naloxone Distribution

Making naloxone widely available helps reverse overdoses and save lives.



First Responder Training

Police, fire, EMS, and other responders need training, tools, and strong referral pathways.



Prescription Drug Safety

Safe use, storage, and disposal of medications can reduce misuse and prevent harm.



Treatment and Recovery Resources

Communities need clear pathways to treatment, recovery support, housing, and other services.

Municipal leadership makes the difference.

Municipal officials help align partners, guide investments, and build a coordinated prevention response that protects health and safety across the community.

