

# ***Community Focus Bulletin:*** ***Creating Community Conversations***



Prepared by Merriam & Associates

## **International Overdose Awareness Day is Monday, August 31**

### ***Local Community Partners Work Together to Prevent Deaths from Overdoses***

Today is a day known around the globe as International Overdose Awareness Day established to commemorate loved ones lost due to overdoses on alcohol and other drugs.

“Wearing silver on August 31 honours the thousands of lives lost to preventable overdoses, while also acknowledging and supporting the mourning process of those friends and family members left behind. “ said Deanna VandenBroek with the Substance Misuse Prevention Program at the Peterborough County-City Health Unit.

A recent report from the Municipal Drug Strategy Coordinators Network of Ontario called *Prescription for Life* found that more than 5000 Ontarians have unintentionally lost their lives due to opioid overdose since the year 2000. On top of this, non-fatal opioid overdoses have been estimated to be 20-25 times the number of deaths. Accidental overdose is the third leading cause of unintentional death in Ontario - a figure that far surpasses deaths due to traffic fatalities.

Peterborough has experienced an increasing rate of opioid related emergency department visits for the last decade (69 opioid related emergency department visits in 2003 versus 155 in 2013), and consistently at a higher rate compared to Ontario. As well, Peterborough now ranks 5<sup>th</sup> highest in opioid prescribing.

“Overdoses continue to affect people of all ages, genders, and socio-economic backgrounds, anyone can fall victim to it, whether using as prescribed or experimenting. Understanding, the signs, and how to respond is the first step to preventing harm. There are resources available locally, and through apps like Overdose Aware App.”, said Meagan La Plante, Coordinator of the Peterborough Drug Strategy.

The Peterborough Drug Strategy continues to work on reducing the harms associated with substance use in our community. A group of partner organizations involved with the [Peterborough Drug Strategy](#) have been working together to offer an overdose prevention program in Peterborough. The program involves providing information and training sessions on how to avoid an opioid overdose and also how to respond to an overdose emergency, including how to administer Naloxone, which is a lifesaving

antidote to an opioid overdose. Naloxone is being provided to those at risk of overdosing on opioids. Such efforts to provide overdose prevention training and Naloxone have been shown to save lives.

More information on overdose awareness and prevention can be found at [www.overdoseday.com](http://www.overdoseday.com) or [www.drugstrategy.ca](http://www.drugstrategy.ca).

**For further information, please contact:**

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