



Public Health Mōno-Gram

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

August 19, 2019

Outbreak of Opioid Overdoses in the Eastern Sierra

The last few weeks have seen a spike in the number of opioid overdoses in the Bishop and Mammoth Lakes areas. A Bishop police officer estimates there have been 6-8 overdoses in and around Bishop in the last few weeks, with two lives lost, while the Mammoth Hospital ER has reported two non-fatal overdoses in the last two weeks. These are alarming numbers for our rural area.

It is rumored that the deaths, and presumably some of the other overdoses, are linked to a dangerous batch of heroin that reached our area. Often such overdose outbreaks are attributable to heroin that is laced with fentanyl, a super-potent injectable opioid.

The American opioid overdose death epidemic continues although deaths declined nationally last year for the first time since the epidemic was recognized. I hope we are not going in the other direction.

Many overdose deaths can be prevented. One way to do that is to distribute the overdose antidote, naloxone (also known as Narcan, a brand name), in the community and to equip law enforcement and other public safety personnel with this lifesaving drug. Naloxone comes in nasal spray and injectable forms for emergency use and many communities in America have successfully reduced overdose deaths by getting naloxone out there, into the hands of people most likely to encounter an overdose.

Free naloxone (Narcan) nasal spray is currently available from Mono County agencies, Northern Inyo Hospital in Bishop, and Toiyabe Indian Health Project. [See below for details.](#) Police officers in Mammoth Lakes and Bishop now carry naloxone for emergency use. Officers in Bishop recently rescued one overdose victim.

A community-generated **Opioid Awareness Event** that will include naloxone training and distribution is being held this Tuesday evening, August 20, 5:30 PM at the Barlow Avenue gym (390 N. Barlow Lane) in Bishop. Everyone is welcome and dinner will be served. Doors open at 5PM.

Opioid use disorder (addiction) is a challenging but treatable disease. The most effective approach is medication-assisted treatment (MAT), which combines medications which prevent withdrawal and control cravings with counseling or psychotherapy. MAT options in the Eastern Sierra are rapidly increasing. MAT with buprenorphine (aka Suboxone) is currently available at No. Inyo Hospital and will soon be available at all Toiyabe Indian Health Project locations, if it is not already. Mammoth Hospital plans to offer MAT for opioid use disorder before the end of the year and it likely will soon be available at Mono County Behavioral Health.

Mono County - Healthy People, Healthy Communities

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Mono County Board of Supervisors: Phone (760) 932-5433

District 1: Jennifer Kreitz, District 2: Fred Stump, District 3: Bob Gardner,

District 4: John Peters, District 5: Stacy Corless, CAO: Leslie Chapman

As Mono County Health Officer and part of the MAT team at No. Inyo Hospital I urge people who use drugs to be careful and to learn about services available to reduce harms from substance use (below). There are a lot of people in our area now working to help people who use drugs stay alive and safe, and to provide help when people want to get off drugs. I hope that people who use opioids and the people who care about them will look into getting naloxone and learning when and how to use it. Naloxone nasal spray is safe, easy to use, and saves lives.

Mono County EMS in collaboration with Mammoth Media Productions has produced a short training video on using naloxone for opioid overdose rescue. <https://monohealth.com/public-health> We are developing additional substance use and harm reduction resources for the Mono Co. Public Health website.

Opioid and Substance Use: Public and Tribal Harm Reduction Resources for Mono County Residents

Mono County Behavioral Health: Free naloxone (Narcan nasal spray) available; new certified syringe exchange/harm reduction resource center opening soon. Counseling/therapy for substance use disorders available for people with MediCal. 3rd Floor Sierra Center Mall, Old Mammoth Road, (760) 924-1740

Mono County Public Health: Free naloxone (Narcan nasal spray) available; testing for hepatitis C and HIV and referral for treatment if positive; safe injection practice education and additional resource information. 2d Floor Minaret Mall, above Giovanni's restaurant, junction Meridian and Old Mammoth Rd, (760) 924-1830

Mono County Emergency Medical Services (EMS): Currently, Paramedic Training Officer Ray McGrale can distribute naloxone (Narcan nasal spray) and we anticipate that paramedics across the county will soon be properly trained and supplied with naloxone for distribution. Call (760) 934-3049 to reach Ray.

Northern Inyo Hospital Free naloxone (Narcan nasal spray) available; MAT for opioid use disorder with buprenorphine (aka Suboxone) or naltrexone; testing for bloodborne pathogens and treatment of hepatitis C; safe injection practice education; assistance with other substance use issues. NIH is also applying to become a certified syringe exchange program. Emergency MAT initiation is available in the NIH Emergency Department where all doctors are getting certified to prescribe buprenorphine. NIH Rural Health Clinic, 153 B Pioneer Lane, Bishop, (760) 873-2031 ask for Arlene Brown or the Care Coordination/MAT Team nurses. Transportation assistance may be available.

Toiyabe Indian Health Project: Free naloxone (Narcan nasal spray) available; MAT available in Lone Pine and soon to be available at all sites; testing for hepatitis and HIV; Hep C treatment available soon; counseling and assistance with substance use disorders. Clinic locations in Bishop, Lone Pine and Coleville. Call Toiyabe Family Services (760) 873-6394 for more information.

Mammoth Hospital: Behavioral health services; testing for hepatitis and HIV; possible HIV treatment and referral for Hep C treatment. MAT program coming soon.