



# COUNTY OF KENOSHA

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John T. Jansen, Director  
Department of Human Services

Patrice Hall, Medical Examiner  
Office of the Medical Examiner  
Kenosha County Public Safety Building  
1000 55<sup>th</sup> Street  
Kenosha, Wisconsin 53140  
Phone: (262) 653-3869  
Fax: (262) 653-3877

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News release

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contacts: Patrice Hall, Medical Examiner  
262-653-3869

### **Medical examiner sounds alarm after responding to three suspected overdose deaths in one day**

Kenosha County Medical Examiner Patrice Hall is again warning people of the dangers of drugs, after her office responded to three suspected overdose cases in one day, on Saturday.

Hall said the deceased ranged in age from 20s to 50s. Two were men; one was a woman.

One of these individuals was taken to the Froedtert South St. Catherine's Medical Center Campus from Antioch, Ill., making it a Kenosha County death investigation case. The other two cases were in the City of Kenosha and the Village of Twin Lakes.

All three cases occurred within about a 12-hour span. Hall said all three are suspected of using cocaine and/or heroin.

"It's highly concerning that we had three suspected overdose deaths within such a short time span," Hall said. "I'm bringing this to the attention of the public so that they are aware of what's going on, and that treatment is available."

To put into perspective the unusual nature of three fatal overdoses in one day, Hall noted that in all of 2018, her office processed 46 deaths due to toxicity – an average of less than one such case per week. Toxicity includes deaths due to abuse of any drugs, such as alcohol, cocaine, heroin and prescription medications, or a combination thereof.

In addition to the fatal cases, the Kenosha Fire Department on Saturday responded to two other, non-fatal overdose calls, said Jim Poltrock, the department's Emergency Medical Services Division chief.

Poltrock noted that the fire department has handled an unusually high number of overdose cases in recent weeks. This includes 43 overdose calls between April 20 and May 26, 30 of which were opioid related. Most of these cases were not fatal.

Kenosha County continues to fight the opioid epidemic with efforts including the Kenosha County Opioid Task Force, free Narcan training and supply for anyone in the community, and medication-assisted treatment.

“We want people to know that there are resources readily available to people with addictive disorder, and that recovery is possible,” said Cynthia Johnson, director of the Kenosha County Division of Health. “If you know someone who is suffering from this disease, you could help save a life by sharing this information.”

Further information about prevention, treatment, and resources are listed below:

### **FREE NARCAN TRAININGS & EDUCATION**

- Narcan is an emergency medication administered nasally to reverse the effects of an opioid overdose.
- It is available for free from the county after receiving a free training session for people 18 and older. Community trainings are held at 5 p.m. on the first Monday of each month at the Kenosha County Job Center and at 5 p.m. the third Thursday of each month at the Racine-Kenosha Community Action Agency, 2000 63<sup>rd</sup> St., Kenosha. Call 262-605-6741 or email [narcan@kenoshacounty.org](mailto:narcan@kenoshacounty.org) to sign up for a training.
- The AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin also provides trainings. Call 262-657-6644 for more information.

### **KNOW WHAT A SUSPECTED OVERDOSE LOOKS LIKE**

- Use the acronym **BLUE**:
  - **B (Breathing)**: The person is not breathing or breathing very slowly. They may be snoring or their breathing sounds like they are gurgling.
  - **L (Lips)**: Lips and finger tips are turning blue.
  - **U (Unresponsive)**: No response when you yell the person’s name or rub the middle of their chest hard.
  - **E (Eyes)**: Center part of their eye is very small, also called “pinpoint pupil.”
- **IF AN OVERDOSE IS SUSPECTED, GIVE NARCAN (if available) AND CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY.** You or someone you know will require follow-up medical attention.

### **TREATMENT/RESOURCES**

- The Kenosha County Opioid Task Force holds its meetings, which are open to the public, at 10 a.m. the second Tuesday of each month at the Kenosha County Job Center, 8600 Sheridan Road, Kenosha. More information is at <http://www.kenoshacounty.org/1917/Opioid-Task-Force>.

- The Mental Health and Substance Abuse Resource Center can help you find treatment and services that are right for you such as counseling, medication assisted treatment, or a 12-step program. Call 262-657-7188 for more information.
- Narcotics Anonymous at 262-653-9800
- Heroin Anonymous/Southport Recovery Club at 262-552-6879
- Comprehensive Alcohol and Drug Treatment Program at 262-654-1004
- Recovery Coaches at 262-652-9830 or 262-658-8166
- Resource packets that include information sheets and pamphlets about opioids and related community agencies and programs may be picked up at the Division of Health, 8600 Sheridan Road, Kenosha, and in the lobby at the Public Safety Building, 1000 55<sup>th</sup> St., Kenosha.
- The “A Way Out” program at local police departments in Lake County, Ill., is available to anyone with private insurance, regardless of their residency. This program fast-tracks drug users to substance abuse programs and services. More information is available at [www.awayoutlc.org](http://www.awayoutlc.org).

## PREVENTION

- **LOCK-UP YOUR MEDICATIONS:** Keep track of quantity by regularly counting your tablets, in order to make sure they are being used as prescribed, and not misused.
  - The Kenosha County Division of Health provides medication lockboxes, free of charge, to all members of the community who feel they could benefit from having them in their home. Call 262-605-6700 for more information.
- **DISPOSE OF UNUSED OR EXPIRED MEDICATION**  
Kenosha County has six medication drop boxes located at all the police departments. Visit <http://www.kenoshacounty.org/314/MedicationNeedle-Disposal> to find the nearest location and collection hours. Also, Medication Take-Back Day events will be held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, April 27 at the Kenosha County Job Center in Kenosha and the Kenosha County Center at highways 45 and 50 in Bristol.
- **DO NOT SHARE** your medications. Use only as prescribed.
- When pain control is needed, ask your medical provider, dentist, or veterinarian if an alternative treatment or medication is available.
- **TALK WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY ABOUT THE DANGERS OF OPIOID/OPIATE USE.** For information visit: <https://www.saveliveskenosha.org/>.

For more information, please call the Kenosha County Division of Health at 262-605-6700 or visit <http://www.kenoshacounty.org/>.

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