

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Connecticut Department of Mental Health  
and Addiction Services

Contact: Jim Siemianowski  
(860) 305-6810 (cell)

## **DMHAS Observes International Overdose Awareness Day**

**Hartford, CT** – Today has been designated as International Overdose Awareness Day, a time to reflect on those who have died while increasing awareness that overdoses are preventable. Sadly, the opioid epidemic continues to ravage Connecticut and our nation. A recent report released by the state’s Department of Public Health shows that overdose deaths related to opioids continue to rise and that report highlights the increasing role that fentanyl plays in these deaths.\* The report is a sober reminder that opioid use disorders (OUD) remain a serious public health threat in our state. DPH’s data shows that 560 people died from an unintentional overdose in the first five months of this year. That same report also shows that 1,200 individuals died in 2019, an 18% increase in overdose deaths when compared to 2018.

Connecticut has made a wide array of resources available to prevent overdoses and to treat OUD. Naloxone can be easily accessed across the state. Naloxone is a lifesaving drug that can reverse opioid overdoses. More information regarding how to access naloxone can be found at the Department of Public Health’s (DPH) Naloxone and Overdose Response App (NORA) listed here: [www.norasaves.com](http://www.norasaves.com). Information regarding pharmacies that prescribe naloxone can be found at the Department of Consumer Protection’s (DCP) website <https://portal.ct.gov/DCP/Drug-Control-Division/Drug-Control/Naloxone-Pharmacies>. Another DCP resource includes the statewide network of drop boxes where prescription medications can be safely disposed of to prevent possible misuse. Information about the drop boxes can be found at <https://portal.ct.gov/DCP/Drug-Control-Division/Drug-Control/Local-Drug-Collection-Boxes>. "We have created maps showing the pharmacies that prescribe Naloxone, as well as prescription collection boxes across our state" said DCP Commissioner Michelle Seagull. "We encourage families of patients who suffer from Opioid Use Disorder to have Naloxone ready to use in case of emergencies, and to dispose of any unused prescription drugs in one of the local drug collection boxes listed."

DMHAS Commissioner Miriam Delphin-Rittmon said “unfortunately the opioid epidemic is still with us. With the right care, support, and treatment, recovery is possible.” Medication-assisted treatment (MAT) is considered to be the treatment of choice for OUD. MAT is accessible across the state. This includes a network of methadone clinics and a growing number of practitioners that are prescribing suboxone, an alternative to methadone. Treatment information for substance and opioid use disorders

\* [https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DPH/Injury-Prevention/Opioid-Overdose-Data/June-2020-and-2019-Drug-Overdose-Deaths-Monthly-Report\\_Updated-on-7-14-2020.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DPH/Injury-Prevention/Opioid-Overdose-Data/June-2020-and-2019-Drug-Overdose-Deaths-Monthly-Report_Updated-on-7-14-2020.pdf)

can be accessed 24-7 using the state's toll free telephone line 1-800-563-4086 or by accessing the resources listed at the following link: <https://liveloud.org/> . Specific information regarding how to access MAT is available at the following link: <https://portal.ct.gov/DMHAS/Programs-and-Services/Opioid-Treatment/Opioid-Treatment> .

Self-help and family support is also available through the Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR). Info about their Community Resources Centers can be found at <https://ccar.us/> . Commissioner Delphin-Rittmon said “nobody dealing with addiction should suffer alone. We know recovery is possible and treatment works. By making use of these resources we can help fight the opioid epidemic together. We must honor the memories of those who have died from overdoses.”

In observance of International Overdose Awareness Day, Commissioner Miriam Delphin-Rittmon will be attending several events today with elected officials.

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\* [https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DPH/Injury-Prevention/Opioid-Overdose-Data/June-2020-and-2019-Drug-Overdose-Deaths-Monthly-Report\\_Updated-on-7-14-2020.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DPH/Injury-Prevention/Opioid-Overdose-Data/June-2020-and-2019-Drug-Overdose-Deaths-Monthly-Report_Updated-on-7-14-2020.pdf)