



## **Governor Lamont and Connecticut officials bring attention to available addiction and recovery resources in advance of International Overdose Awareness Day**

**HARTFORD, CT (8/30/24)** – In advance of International Overdose Awareness Day, which is commemorated annually on August 31, Governor Ned Lamont, members of Connecticut's Congressional delegation, the state's constitutional officers, and state agency commissioners are reaffirming their commitment to combat the overdose crisis that has devastated communities across the state and nation and are bringing attention to addiction and recovery resources that are available in Connecticut.

International Overdose Awareness Day is a global campaign to end overdose, remember without stigma those who have died, and acknowledge the grief of the family and friends left behind.

Connecticut has dedicated many resources toward combatting this crisis in an effort to prevent, discourage, and destigmatize opioid addiction. Notably, in 2019 the state – through the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services – launched its LiveLOUD campaign, which includes a series of social media, radio, transit, and billboard advertisements directed to those who are actively using fentanyl, heroin, or prescription opioids, as well as their families and communities.

By visiting [www.LiveLOUD.org](http://www.LiveLOUD.org), people struggling with opioid use disorder and their friends and family can learn about this complex issue, get connected to support and treatment options, and learn how to become a LiveLOUD partner to help spread awareness. Additionally, anyone seeking treatment for addiction can visit [www.ctaddictionservices.com](http://www.ctaddictionservices.com) or **call 1-800-563-4086** (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) to get connected to nearby services throughout Connecticut.

**Governor Lamont said**, "Addiction is an illness that should be treated just as any other public health emergency, and we must be able to discuss it openly and without fear of judgement. This illness can impact anyone from any neighborhood, any socioeconomic background, any race and nationality, any education level, and any age. We need to send the message that this disorder can no longer hide in the shadows and be treated like something that shouldn't be discussed. Resources are available for those seeking treatment, as well as for the families and loved ones who want to provide support for those in need. Discussing this issue openly and honestly is what can save lives and prevent addiction altogether."

**Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz said,** “We are committed to combatting the impacts of the overdose epidemic in Connecticut. On International Overdose Awareness Day, we stand in unity and remembrance to honor those who have lost their lives to overdose and addiction. A person living with a substance use disorder may feel alone, forgotten, and helpless – and likewise, a loved one trying to recover from losing someone to their battle with addiction may feel alone, forgotten, and helpless in their grief. But you are not alone, we have not forgotten you, and help is available.”

**Attorney General William Tong said,** “Today, on International Overdose Awareness Day, I am thinking of the thousands of Connecticut families who have lost children, parents, and loved ones to opioid addiction, as well the people in our state who are still fighting to recover and free themselves from addiction. Connecticut has led efforts to take on the worst players in the addiction industry, securing more than \$50 billion nationwide to combat the opioid epidemic, including \$600 million for Connecticut alone. With the money to support treatment, prevention, and recovery services on its way to hard hit communities, the day is coming closer when we can finally get everyone the help they deserve and put an end to the pain and suffering caused by this epidemic.”

**Comptroller Sean Scanlon said,** “On Overdose Awareness Day, we honor the memories of those we’ve lost and recognize the countless lives touched by the devastation of addiction. This day is a solemn reminder of the work that still lies ahead. Each life lost is a tragedy, but together, through compassion and with action, we can build a healthier, more supportive Connecticut for all.”

**U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal said,** “Today we mourn the 1,340 lives lost to overdoses this year and honor them with action. Despite encouraging decreases in deaths this year, the substance use epidemic is an urgent crisis and we must continue working diligently to dismantle the destructive grip addiction has on our communities. I am proud to have secured \$15 million in federal funding for prevention efforts in Connecticut and will keep fighting for federal resources to ensure no more families are torn apart by addiction and overdoses.”

**U.S. Senator Chris Murphy said,** “The opioid crisis has devastated far too many families in Connecticut and across the country. As we honor the lives we’ve lost, we must also recommit ourselves to helping those who are still struggling. I will continue to work with families and survivors to push for policies that combat overprescribing, stem the flow of fentanyl into our country, and save lives.”

**Congressman John Larson (CT-01) said,** “Families across Connecticut and the nation have felt the pain and suffering caused by the opioid epidemic. The Connecticut Congressional delegation has worked closely with the state to bring back federal funding to address this public health crisis and expand access to opioid use disorder treatment options. I will continue to work with our partners to connect families and individuals with the care and support they need as we combat this crisis.”

**Congressman Joe Courtney (CT-02) said,** “The epidemic of opioid addiction and overdose deaths is one of the most gut-wrenching, disheartening problems our nation faces, and our state is no exception. While overdose deaths in New London County fell by nearly 50% in 2023, I’m committed to bringing home ongoing federal resources to help our communities overcome this crisis. Thankfully, we have hard-working organizations on the ground who are partnering with first responders to prevent overdose deaths and connect people suffering from addiction to long term recovery treatment which, in the end, saves lives.”

**Congressman Jim Himes (CT-04) said,** “Most Americans have a personal connection to the opioid crisis, with each life lost to an overdose leaving a permanent hole behind in their loved ones’ hearts. But, by increasing availability of treatment resources and combatting the stigma around drug abuse, we can make great strides to reduce the number of lives taken by addiction.”

**Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services Commissioner Nancy Navarretta said,** “Overdose Awareness Day is a time for reflection, support, and unity as we mourn those we have tragically lost. In Connecticut alone, 1,343 lives were lost to overdose last year, contributing to over 100,000 overdose deaths nationwide. However, it is encouraging to note that overdose deaths in our state are down by 8.3%, indicating progress in our collective efforts. Each time I meet families who have suffered a loss, their faces and stories stay with me, motivating me to work tirelessly to further reduce this heartbreaking number. Approximately 77% of these deaths involved synthetic opioids like fentanyl, highlighting the urgent need for increased awareness and prevention efforts. Every individual struggling with substance use disorder is someone’s loved one and deserves our unwavering support. Together, we can bring about meaningful change and ensure that Overdose Awareness Day serves as a powerful reminder of the value of every life.”

**Connecticut Department of Public Health Commissioner Manisha Juthani, MD, said,** “International Overdose Awareness Day is a sobering time when we not only remember the lives that have been lost but we remember the family members and loved ones who have

been impacted by an overdose death. One overdose death is one too many, and at the Department of Public Health, we employ different levels of primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention methods to address this problem. Leveling state and local partnerships, employing harm reduction strategies, relying on those with lived experience, and implementing interventions to try to prevent young people from starting to use substances in the first place make up a public health strategy that will help people make it through this crisis.”

