



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Ledge Light Health District  
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New London, CT - The Overdose Action Team/NLC CARES Team will join people around the world in observing International Overdose Awareness Day on Wednesday, August 31. This year, the NLC CARES Team will travel throughout the region to hold a series of ‘pop-up’ events designed to raise awareness of the overdose epidemic and to encourage everyone in the community to be part of the effort to save lives. Community members are welcome to come to one or more of the events to learn about overdose and receive a free naloxone (overdose reversal) kit. The schedule of events is as follows:

- 9:45am – Community Health Center, Inc, Shaw’s Cove, New London
- 11:00am – Old Lyme Town Hall, 52 Lyme St, Old Lyme
- 12:30pm – Waterford Community Center, 24 Rope Ferry Rd, Waterford
- 1:30pm – Groton Library/Thrive55+ Lot, Newtown Rd, Groton
- 2:30pm – Stonington Human Services, 166 S Broad St, Pawcatuck
- 4:00pm – Williams Park, Broad St, New London
- 5:30pm – Ledyard Farmers’ Market, 740 Colonel Ledyard Highway, Ledyard
- 7:00pm – Wheeler Library, 101 Main St, North Stonington

The Old Lyme event will include an announcement of an EMS-Public Health Partnership to expand support for people who experience overdose. Lock boxes and other resources will be available through the Lyme-Old Lyme Prevention Coalition ([www.lysb.org/prevention](http://www.lysb.org/prevention)).

The New London event will include an announcement of 24/7 naloxone access.

The Team hopes that bringing these events to locations throughout the region will start dialogue in both public and private spaces. “We need to change the conversation about drug use and overdose,” said Kelly Thompson, CEO of Alliance for Living and co-chair of the Overdose Action Team. “We are here to support both public officials and family members in understanding what science tells us about substance use and health and how we can best support people we care about.”

NLC CARES is a collaboration between Ledge Light Health District, Alliance for Living and the City of New London and provides support and services throughout the region. New London Mayor Michael Passero stated that "Overdose Awareness Day is an important time for us to come together to remember those we have lost and to stress the urgency for preventing overdoses. I am so proud of our NLC CARES initiative. The partnership with Alliance for Living, Ledge Light Health District, the City of New London and community partners is recognized as a model for the State.”

“This work is ongoing, but on International Overdose Awareness Day we take a pause to hold space for those who have been impacted by overdose, and to reaffirm our commitment to supporting people and to advocating

Promoting healthy communities

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for public health policies that will save lives. We welcome everyone to join us,” said Jennifer Muggeo, Deputy Director for Ledge Light Health District and Project Director for NLC CARES.

For more information, contact Jennifer Muggeo at 860.912.1429 or [jmuggeo@llhd.org](mailto:jmuggeo@llhd.org).

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Building on needs assessments and partnerships established through 2016, in January 2017, community organizations, government agencies and individuals from southeastern CT began regular monthly meetings focused on coordinating efforts and interventions in response to the opioid epidemic. Facilitated by Ledge Light Health District, the City of New London and Alliance for Living, this group serves as the Overdose Action Team of the Health Improvement Collaborative of Southeast Connecticut and implements the NLC CARES Project. There is robust participation from multiple sectors including first responders, social service agencies, public health, treatment providers, academia and people living with Opioid Use Disorder.

The Overdose Action Team’s purpose is to:

- Convene interested individuals and groups;
- Coordinate efforts, resources and events when possible;
- Share and promote best practices;
- Come together around specific projects;
- Focus on the places where there is agreement and synergy;
- Share information and data.

The team has identified a mission statement, which is *to create and enhance conditions in our community that lead to sustained support for a continuum of care through a person’s recovery journey.*

The Overdose Action Team’s goals are:

- Coordinated, equal access to quality and appropriate treatment;
- Increased best practice treatment services;
- Comprehensive education and marketing about treatment options, prevention and support, and risks and signs of addiction;
- Reduction of stigma and discrimination;
- Comprehensive support services for families and communities;
- Policies, systems and practices that ensure equal access to appropriate and timely services and information.

The Team has also identified a list of values that are core to discussions and activities, as follows:

- We value a holistic approach that addresses all factors that impact a person’s health and wellness.
- We value diversity in our team members and community partners.
- We value and respect people living with a substance use disorder and their lived experiences.
- We value addressing implicit and explicit bias and stigma.
- We value cultural humility.
- We value culturally respectful and appropriate services.
- We value collaboration and consensus building decision making.
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