

November 8, 2018

**Opioid Overdose Increase Reported in the Northern Shenandoah Valley**  
*Residents Urged to Seek Help*

**WINCHESTER** – Three opioid overdose deaths have been reported by the Northwest Virginia Regional Drug Task Force in the past two weeks bringing the total number of lives lost this year to 18. The region has also experienced a recent climb in the number of non-fatal overdoses with 18 reported in the last month. The three latest deaths happened in Frederick County, Shenandoah County, and the City of Winchester.

The Northern Shenandoah Valley Substance Abuse Coalition (NSVSAC) is asking for the public's assistance in reaching out to friends and loved ones who are living with addiction to offer them help. "When a person's mind is being hijacked by the disease of addiction it is hard for them to ask for help. It is our hope to make the public aware of the warning signs of substance use and if they are identified, to offer resources for an alternative path," says NSVSAC Executive Director Lauren Cummings.

The following are general signs of substance use:

- Bloodshot eyes, pupils larger or smaller than usual
- Change in appetite or sleep patterns
- Deterioration of physical appearance, personal grooming habits
- Sudden weight loss or weight gain
- Tremors, slurred speech, or impaired coordination
- Engaging in secretive or suspicious behaviors
- Legal trouble
- Neglecting responsibilities
- Sudden change in friends or hobbies
- Unexplained need for money or financial problems
- Appearing fearful, anxious, or paranoid, without a reason
- Lack of motivation
- Mood swings, increased irritability, or angry outbursts
- Unexplained change in personality or attitude
- Social Isolation

If you suspect that a friend or family member has a substance use disorder you should talk to the person about your concerns and offer help and support without being judgmental. Finally you should seek help by:

- Visiting [www.roadtorecovery.info](http://www.roadtorecovery.info) and clicking on the treatment or resources tab at the top of the page.
- Calling the Peer2Peer Regional Warm Line 24 hours a day/7 days a week at 1-833-626-1490.

- Visiting the Peer Recovery Center at Northwestern Community Services at 1014 Amherst Street, Winchester, VA, Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

The NSVSAC also encourages friends and family members to get free NARCAN from the Winchester/Frederick County Health Department by calling 540-722-3470 to schedule a time to attend a short training and to receive the medication.

In addition to the 18 individuals who have overdosed and died this year there have been 126 total non-fatal overdoses reported. In 2017, 40 people died and 190 non-fatal overdoses were reported in the Northern Shenandoah Valley.

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