

Overview of Opioid Overdoses in Vermont

Data indicates there were 244 accidental or undetermined opioid-related fatalities among Vermont residents in 2022, an increase from previous years. Fentanyl is involved in 93% of these fatalities, while cocaine is involved in 49%, and xylazine in 28%.¹ As more substances are involved in overdose fatalities, access to naloxone (the opioid antidote medication) is becoming more important. Naloxone is often known by the brand name Narcan®.

Community Naloxone Distribution

The Health Department's Opioid Overdose Prevention and Reversal Program (OOPRP) collaborates with community-based organizations and first responders to distribute naloxone and other harm reduction supplies. The OOPRP provides training on overdose prevention, overdose response, and opioid misuse prevention including referrals to harm reduction, recovery, and treatment services across Vermont. The goal of the OOPRP is to distribute naloxone overdose rescue kits to anyone who may be able to help in the event of an overdose. As fentanyl is being found in many illicit substances, it is important for anyone using any powder or pill, not purchased at a pharmacy, to have naloxone on hand and teach loved ones where it is kept and how to use it in case of an opioid overdose. Learn more about [overdose prevention and naloxone distribution](#). Learn where to access naloxone at VTHelpLink.org.

The OOPRP supports community naloxone distribution through three pathways:

- Community Distribution by:
 - [Narcan® Kit](#) Program and
 - [Harm Reduction Pack](#) (HRP) Program
- First responder distribution by the [leave behind kit](#) (LBK) program

This data brief focuses on the community based distribution of naloxone. Read the [quarterly EMS naloxone distribution and administration data brief](#).

KEY POINTS

During 2023:

- **At least 68,827 doses of naloxone were distributed by the health department to community partners.**
 - **Of those, 39,975 doses were confirmed to be distributed by community partners.**
- **Community naloxone was reported to reverse 152 overdoses.**
- **911 was called for a third of all reported overdoses (33%).**

¹ [Vermont Department of Health - Opioid-Related Fatal Overdoses Among Vermonters](#)

Community Naloxone Distribution and Administration

Changes to the OOPRP in 2022

An extensive quality improvement project was conducted in 2022 to align OOPRP data collection with current overdose prevention programming evaluation needs. The new data collection form for the Narcan® Kit program launched in January 2023. Therefore, this brief will contain different data elements than previous reports.

Naloxone Distribution by the Vermont Department of Health

The following table contains data on naloxone-related kits and materials distributed to community partners by the Vermont Department of Health. This includes **Narcan® kits** provided to the OOPRP community naloxone distribution sites, **harm reduction packs** (HRP) given to distribution sites, and **leave behind kits** given to first responder agencies.

Distribution of Naloxone Doses from the Vermont Department of Health – 2023 (Preliminary)					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Narcan® kit program: Number of doses distributed to community sites	6,480	9,398	11,031	8,258	35,167
Harm reduction packs: Number of doses distributed to HRP sites	6,110	9,866	8,972	5,594	30,542
Leave behind kits: Number of doses provided to first responder agencies (2 doses/kit)	528	498	1,244	848	3,118
Total doses of naloxone distributed by the Vermont Department of Health	13,118	19,762	21,247	14,700	68,827

Naloxone Distribution by Community Sites

The following table contains data collected by the OOPRP community naloxone distribution sites and harm reduction pack distribution sites. These data are updated on a quarterly basis. Historic data may change due to delays in reporting. All data in the table should be considered preliminary until the annual data report is published.

Naloxone Distribution to Community – 2023 (Preliminary)					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Narcan® kit program: Number of doses distributed by community sites (2 doses/kit)	1,864	4,069	5,010	2,116	13,059
Harm reduction packs: Number doses distributed by HRP sites (2 doses/pack)	7,158	8,166	6,370	4,068	25,762
Leave behind kits: Number of doses distributed by first responder agencies (2 doses/kit)	282	242	318	312	1,154
Doses of naloxone distributed to community	9,304	12,447	11,698	6,496	39,975

Community Naloxone Distribution and Administration

Of the overdoses reported by clients receiving naloxone during 2023...



911 was called for **33%** of the overdoses.



90% reported overdose reversal after naloxone administration.

Information Reported by Naloxone Recipients at Community Sites

In 2023, naloxone was given out at community sites during 2,485 client interactions². Clients are asked to answer a few questions to help the program improve naloxone distribution. To minimize naloxone access barriers, answering these questions is optional. One-quarter of clients responded to the distribution questionnaire, see these responses below. Of the 15% of clients who reported demographic information, 92% identified their race as white alone and 98% identified their ethnicity as non-Hispanic. Naloxone recipient ages range from 12 to 78 years old, with the median age of 39.

The number of responses for each question, as indicated by n=, varies because each question is optional and may allow multiple responses.

Client's Reason for Getting Naloxone					
<i>*The client could choose multiple reasons</i>					
	Q1 (n = 144)	Q2 (n = 246)	Q3 (n = 211)	Q4 (n = 53)	Overall
To replace naloxone I used to have	51%	34%	40%	11%	38%
To have some on hand	43%	63%	60%	85%	59%
I am picking naloxone up for another person	9%	6%	5%	13%	7%
Some other reason	4%	3%	1%	2%	2%

Client's First Time Receiving Naloxone?					
	(n = 137)	(n = 205)	(n = 187)	(n = 52)	Overall
Yes	18%	20%	19%	52%	22%
No	82%	80%	81%	48%	78%

² Identifying client information is not collected. These interactions are likely a mix of first-time and return visits.

Community Naloxone Distribution and Administration

Information Reported by Naloxone Recipients at Community Sites (continued)

If not the client's first-time receiving naloxone, what happened to the naloxone the client had before?

**The client could choose multiple reasons*

	(n = 103)	(n = 105)	(n = 90)	(n = 24)	Overall
It was used	50%	59%	60%	63%	57%
It was given away	37%	30%	24%	8%	29%
It expired	8%	12%	12%	29%	12%
Something else	14%	4%	7%	8%	8%

If not the client's first-time receiving naloxone, where did the client previously get naloxone from?

**The client could choose multiple locations*

	Q1 (n = 100)	Q2 (n = 154)	Q3 (n = 124)	Q4 (n = 23)	Overall
Community organization or clinic like this one	84%	92%	83%	52%	85%
Friend	10%	4%	7%	13%	7%
Medical Provider	8%	4%	11%	22%	8%
Some other place	9%	5%	7%	26%	8%

Is the client interested in treatment?

**Only asked by organizations that provide referrals to Substance Use Disorder treatment*

	(n = 117)	(n = 117)	(n = 103)	(n = 52)	Overall
Currently in treatment	41%	44%	50%	13%	41%
Yes	5%	4%	2%	8%	4%
No	38%	43%	34%	63%	42%
Question was not discussed	14%	3%	2%	6%	6%
Refused/Don't Know	3%	6%	12%	10%	7%

Community Naloxone Distribution and Administration

Overdose Information Reported by Clients

People receiving naloxone were asked if they wanted to share information about an overdose they witnessed. The following data highlights information about the 243 overdoses reported to community distribution sites by clients in 2023. Historic data may change due to reporting delays.

Overdose Information Reported by Clients – 2023					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Number of overdoses reported by naloxone kit recipients	51	96	69	27	243
Number of times 911 was called for a perceived overdose	20	24	28	8	80
Number of people receiving naloxone in response to a perceived overdose	44	101	58	25	228
Number of doses used to reverse a perceived overdose	147	261	163	44	615
Successful overdose reversals reported	43	56	42	11	152

Key Takeaways:

The community distribution sites active in 2023 were effective in distributing naloxone to community members with nearly 40,000 doses distributed during this one-year period. Of the Vermonters receiving naloxone and consented to answering the data collection form, 38% previously received naloxone and were picking up more to replace doses that were used. This indicates that the community sites are reaching people who are well posed to respond to an overdose.

Vermonters receiving naloxone in 2023 reported 243 overdoses during the year, 228 of those overdoses were administered naloxone, resulting in 152 individuals reported to have begun breathing again. 911 was called for approximately one third of overdoses reported. As more adulterants, such as xylazine, enter the drug supply, it is critical to call 911 even if naloxone is administered. The information collected during this period may indicate that Vermonters receiving naloxone are being effectively trained in how to use it, and in the steps to take when responding to an overdose.

For more information on the OOPRP: www.HealthVermont.gov/naloxone

For more information on SIREN: www.HealthVermont.gov/siren

For more information on overdose prevention strategies: www.KnowODVT.com

For more information on harm reduction, treatment, and recovery services: www.VTHelpLink.org

For questions about this data brief: naloxone@vermont.gov