



CITY of NORTHAMPTON
Department of Health and Human Services

Merridith O'Leary, RS ~ Commissioner
Municipal Building ~ 212 Main Street ~ Northampton, MA 01060
Phone (413) 587-1214 ~ Fax (413) 587-1221
<http://www.northamptonma.gov/245/Health>



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - August 25, 2025

**City of Northampton to Recognize International Overdose
Awareness Day at Forbes Library**

NORTHAMPTON - The City of Northampton will hold an event and candlelight vigil on Thursday, August 28th from 6:00 - 8:00 pm outside Forbes Library to commemorate International Overdose Awareness Day and honor the lives lost to overdose. The city-sponsored program is being organized by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Hampshire HOPE. It will be supported by a variety of community partners - Tapestry Health, DART, Northampton Recovery Center, Learn To Cope, Northwest District Attorney David E. Sullivan, and more.

All are welcome to come together in community to honor and remember those we have lost to overdose. This is a space to reflect, connect, share resources, and engage in mutual support with fellow community members. The 2025 theme for International Overdose Awareness Day is "One Big Family; Driven By Hope," to remind us that we are bound by shared experiences and responsibility, and because we share in the power to change what comes next. International Overdose Awareness Day has been marked in communities worldwide since 2001, with events held during the last week of August with the goal of reducing stigma, increasing awareness of the prevalence of overdose deaths, and supporting those struggling with the disease.

Taylor McAndrew, Director of Substance Use Prevention for DHHS, states, "Each year, International Overdose Awareness Days serves as a reminder that no one is in this alone. This year, we honor the theme of 'One Big Family.' We gather as a community united by remembrance and resilience, and reaffirm our commitment to building a future free from stigma."

Mayor Sciarra shared, "International Overdose Awareness Day is a reminder of the people we've lost and the responsibility we share to keep working for change. Here in Northampton, we come together as one community—neighbors, families, friends—to grieve, to lift each other up, to reduce stigma, and to save more lives. This year's theme, 'One Big Family; Driven by Hope,' truly speaks to who we are and how we move forward."

The event will begin at 6:00 p.m. on the library lawn with resource tabling, Narcan training and distribution, and community networking. At 7:00 p.m. the formal program will commence, featuring speakers affected by the opioid crisis, including the families and friends of those grieving the loss of a loved one, as well as people working in the field who also experience loss. The evening will conclude with a luminaria memorial. Refreshments and resources will be available.

For more information, contact Taylor McAndrew, Director of Prevention at 413-587-1322 or by email at tmcandrew@northamptonma.gov