

January 2024

MERIDEN HARM REDUCTION AND OVERDOSE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

CITY OF MERIDEN
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Issue #2

THIS REPORT INCLUDES:

1. Year in Review Data
2. Last Quarter Activities
3. Community Outreach
4. Meriden Opioid Referral for Recovery (MORR) Program
5. Harm Reduction Activities and the End Stigma in Meriden Campaign
6. Upcoming Trainings

LOOKING BACK: 2023, A YEAR IN REVIEW

NALOXONE TRAINING AND DISTRIBUTION: In 2023 we continued our partnership with Rushford, Hunters Ambulance, and Meriden Police and Fire Departments to offer harm reduction, overdose prevention, treatment and recovery services. A major part of harm reduction and overdose prevention is the distribution and education on Naloxone.

Naloxone is a lifesaving opioid overdose reversal medication. It is a short acting medication that can reverse a lethal dosage of opioids by temporarily blocking the effects of the drug. Naloxone restores someone's ability to breath allowing time to access medical attention. We train on the nasal spray type of naloxone (known as Narcan), which is fairly simple to administer and harmless if administered to someone who is not overdosing.



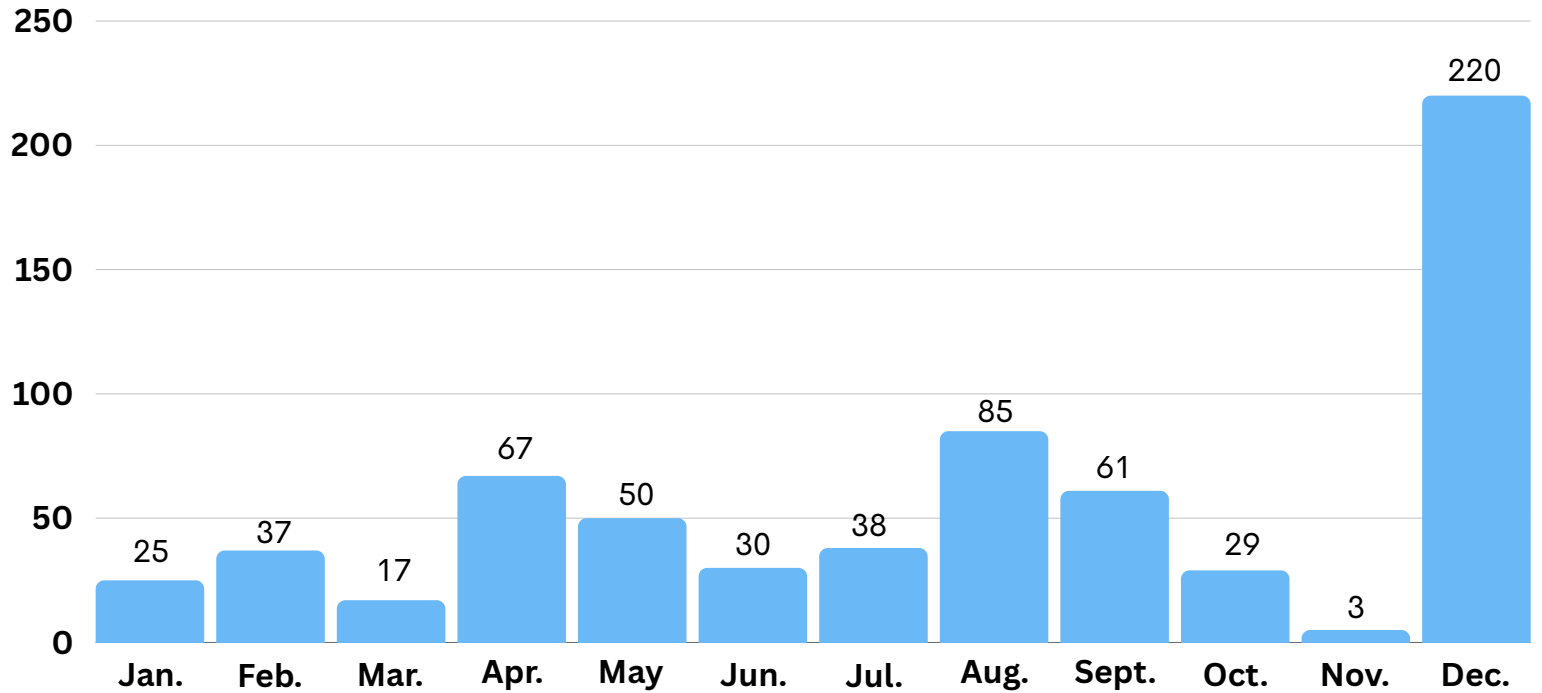
In 2023 we hosted **23** training opportunities and distributed **664** Naloxone kits! Kits were distributed during community training opportunities, to Meriden businesses/agencies and community partners and put in leave-behind kits that the Meriden Police, Fire, and Hunter's Ambulance use during response to someone that may have overdosed.

Meriden businesses/agencies were also given Overdose Emergency Kit Wall Cabinet and wall signage to store their Naloxone. These cabinets are a wonderful addition to an employee health and safety program. In 2023 we distributed **21** cabinets to the following locations: City of Meriden buildings (Health, Library, Senior Center, City Hall, Board of Education), Meriden Housing Authority, Unitarian Universalist Church, Corner House, New Opportunities of Greater Meriden, Rushford, Meriden Adult Probation, MidState Arc, Higher Movement Dance Studio, Helping People Excel, TriCircle Inc., Meriden Soup Kitchen, and CT Counseling Center. **To learn more about these cabinets please see page 4 of this report!**

We will continue these activities in 2024, thanks to funding from 2 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grants and from an allocation of naloxone the CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS).

Number of Naloxone Kits Distributed By Our Department - 2023

All were 4mg nasal



Question, Persuade, Refer Training: Known as QPR, this suicide prevention training is offered to the community and Meriden businesses/agencies. This training is designed to teach "gatekeepers" - those who are strategically positioned to recognize and refer someone at risk of suicide - the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to respond by questioning, persuading, and referring the person to appropriate resources.

In 2023 we did 13 trainings with 160 total participants.

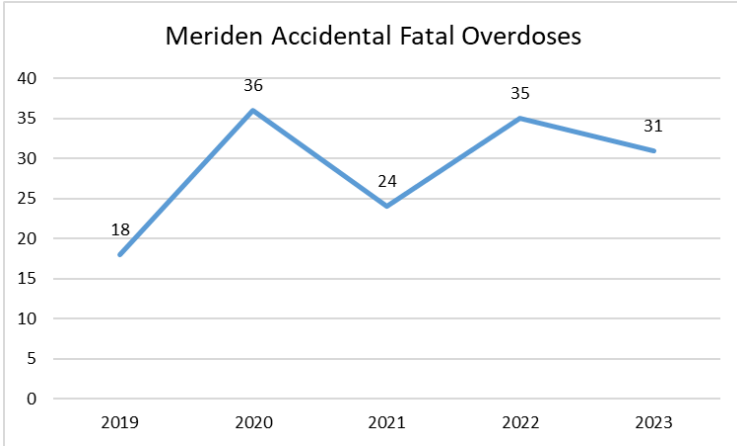
Trainings were held with the community and Meriden agencies such as the South Meriden Volunteer Fire Department, New Opportunities of Greater Meriden, Higher Movement Dance Studio, Helping People Excel, and with our Public Health Nurses and Health Aides that work in the Meriden Public Schools.



Trainings are done in person or virtually and everyone gets a certificate after the training as a "gatekeeper". Visit www.meridenhealth.com for our upcoming trainings.

MERIDEN OVERDOSE DATA - 2023

In 2023 our Department increased surveillance of both non-fatal and fatal overdoses in Meriden. Thanks to a capacity building grant from NACCHO (the National Association of County and City Health Officials), and in partnership with the New Haven Health Department, we are able to create internal dashboards to share with partners who work in harm reduction, treatment and recovery. As to not increase the stigma already surrounding substance use, we only share select data with the public.



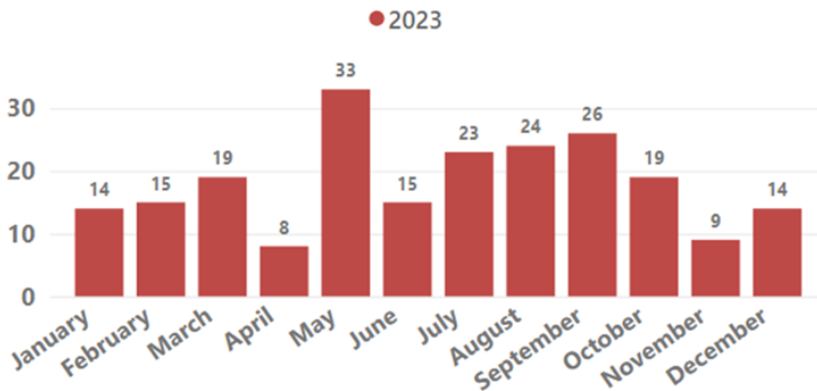
The chart of the left shows accidental overdose deaths for 2023. This data is preliminary as of December 7, 2023 and is from the CT Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (CT OCME).

In 2023:

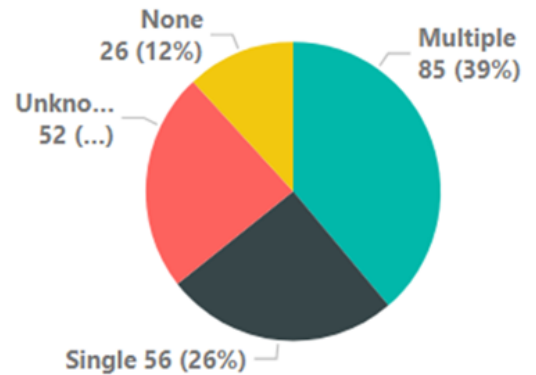
- 96% of accidental fatal overdoses involved some type of opioid.
- 87% involved Fentanyl.
- 13% involved Xylazine.

The following data is from the Overdose Detection Mapping Application Program (ODMAP), which provides near real-time suspected overdose data to support public safety and public health efforts to mobilize response to a sudden increase, or spike, in overdose events. In 2023, there were a total of 219 overdose incidents reported in ODMAP among Meriden residents. All data is subject to change.

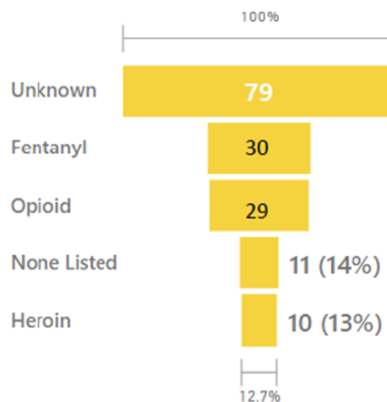
OD INCIDENTS BY MONTH



NALOXONE DOSE ADMINISTERED

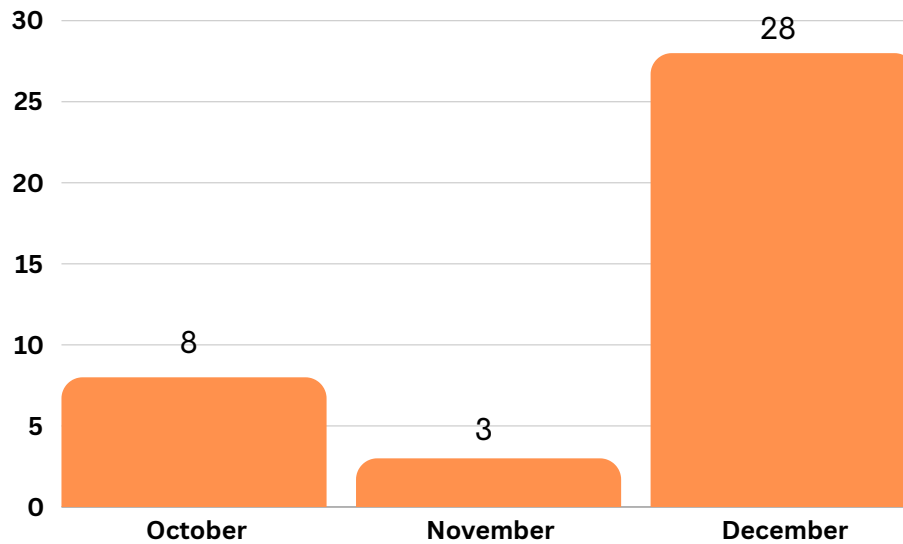


SUSPECTED DRUG



LAST QUARTER ACTIVITIES (OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2023)

**Number of
Participants
Trained in
Naloxone
(Narcan®)**



Community Events: This past quarter staff attended 3 community events in an effort to engage with community members and promote harm reduction efforts in our city. The events were Meriden Public Schools' Resource Night at Maloney High School, Yulefest, and Christmas in the Village.

Staff distributed bilingual materials including flyers about upcoming trainings, Detera medication disposal bags, Timer Caps for safe medication storage, MORR program materials, 988 suicide hotline resources and more.

Pop-up style Naloxone trainings were offered at Yulefest and Christmas in the Village.

Overdose Emergency Kit Wall Cabinet and Signage:

In an effort to increase access to naloxone in Meriden, in 2023 we started distributing overdose emergency kit wall cabinets and signage. These are branded with our contact info and QR code to our harm reduction webpage.

Twenty branded wall kits with signage were distributed in 2023.

Meriden businesses and community organizations can apply for an Overdose Emergency Kit wall cabinet and wall sign through our harm reduction webpage - <https://tinyurl.com/MeridenHarmRed>. We will provide naloxone training to staff as part of the delivery. Having a filled wall cabinet with naloxone is a perfect addition to businesses' health and safety program!



If you are interested in a wall cabinet and naloxone training please contact Elizabeth DeMerchant, Public Health Educator, at (203) 630-4288 or edemerchant@meridenct.gov.

MERIDEN OPIOID REFERRAL FOR RECOVERY (MORR) PROGRAM

New Funding: We are proud to announce that we have received a \$2 million award from the US Dept. of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to continue the Meriden Opioid Referral for Recovery program (MORR). This grant will allow us to continue important work with Rushford, Fire, Police, Hunters Ambulance, and other community partners to provide education, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery services to our community. The grant period is September 30, 2023 to September 29, 2027.

In 2024 Rushford will be utilizing a new mobile outreach van to conduct onsite outreach in the Meriden community. The van will be stocked with naloxone and other harm reduction supplies to keep our community safe!

Call (203) 634-7416 to learn more about MORR! Or visit the website: <https://rushford.org/addiction/morr>



HARM REDUCTION AND PREVENTION ACTIVITIES

The Waterbury Health Department's Prevention Unit is one of our partners who conducts street level community outreach with individuals who may be in need.

Through a regional Overdose Data to Action (OD2A) grant from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), staff from the Prevention Unit comes to Meriden 3 to 4 times a month to connect with community members and distribute naloxone kits, Fentanyl test strips, incentive bags (hygiene kits, snacks, water, etc.), community resources, and other harm reduction materials. Our Department works closely with this team, using our local data, to inform them of local trends. Likewise, they let us know feedback from our community on what would be helpful to increase prevention and reduce stigma.

The Prevention Unit works with community agencies such as the Meriden Soup Kitchen, Salvation Army, Grace Place food pantry, and more to connect individuals to substance use treatment or mental health services. Most recently the Prevention Unit partnered on a Warming Meriden event, where we provide them with 24 naloxone kits to distribute. Their partnership is a great addition to Meriden's harm reduction and overdose prevention and response!



Medication Drop Box: Have unwanted or expired medication in your home? Take it to the drop box in the lobby of the Meriden Police Department located at 50 West Main Street! It is available 24/7/365. The picture below shows what is accepted and not-accepted in the drop box.



MEDICATION DROP BOX



**Available in the lobby of the
Meriden Police
Department**
50 West Main Street, Meriden, CT 06451

For the general public only

Now you can safely, legally, and securely dispose of expired and no longer needed prescriptions and medications on an ongoing basis, 24/7/365. Support a drug-free Meriden!

Items Accepted and Not Accepted in the Permanent Medication Drop Box:

Accepted Items:	Items NOT Accepted:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Prescription medications ✓ Over-the-counter medication ✓ Medication samples ✓ Medication for pets ✓ Liquid medication in glass or sealed containers ✓ Medicated ointments and lotions ✓ Narcotics ✓ Vitamins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Personal care products ✗ Needles/lancets/syringes ✗ Thermometers ✗ IV bags/empty containers ✗ Bloody/infectious waste ✗ Hydrogen peroxide containers ✗ Aerosol cans

www.meridenc1.gov


www.MeridenHealthyYouthCoalition.com



BUZON DE MEDICAMENTOS

**Disponible Ahora
En la sala de espera del
Departamento de Policía de Meriden**
50 West Main Street, Meriden, CT 06451

Para uso exclusiva de público en general

Ahora puede depositar, de manera segura y legal, todos sus medicamentos o recetas que han expirado o que ya no son necesarias 24/7/365. Apoyemos un Meriden libre de drogas!

Artículos aceptados y no aceptados en el buzón de medicamentos:

Artículos Aceptados:	Artículos No Aceptados:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Medicamentos recetados ✓ Medicamentos sin receta ✓ Muestras de medicamentos ✓ Medicamentos para mascotas ✓ Medicamentos en forma líquida en envase de cristal o sellados ✓ Lociones o cremas medicadas ✓ Narcóticos ✓ Vitaminas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Productos de higiene personal ✗ Agujas/Jeringas/Lancetas ✗ Termómetros ✗ Bolsas de suero/Contenedores vacíos ✗ Residuos infecciosos/ensangrentados ✗ Contenedores de Agua Oxigenada ✗ Lata de Aerosol

www.meridenc1.gov


www.meridenhealthyouthcoalition.com

Medication Disposal Bags: Can't make it to the drop box? We offer Detera medication disposal bags to residents. These bags are an easy and environmental friendly way to dispose of unwanted or expired medications. Each bag will hold 45 pills, 6 oz. of liquid, or 6 patches.

Call (203) 630-4221 to request a medication disposal bag. These are also given out at community events we attend.



End Stigma in Meriden Campaign: End Stigma in Meriden is a campaign created by the City of Meriden in partnership with Rushford as part of harm reduction and overdose prevention and response efforts in our city. This campaign launched on October 30, 2023 and is funded by the NACCHO and the CDC.

In an effort to increase health equity we took several steps to gain community input. In partnership with New Haven Health Department we launched a community survey to gather information about public stigma regarding substance use disorder. This survey was available to the community in August 2023 and had over 200 responses from Meriden residents. From this we designed a social media campaign to address misconceptions about substance use disorder including the importance of person-first language, carrying naloxone, and recovery options for individuals. This was accomplished with technical assistance from Shatterproof, NACCHO, and CDC. We also consulted with community partners through pre-testing materials to gather feedback. We used Meriden landmarks and community members with lived experience to make this campaign relatable and personable to the Meriden community.

Once the campaign was ready to launch we partnered with the Record Journal for print and digital ads. We also utilized social media and printed posters with a QR code to our harm reduction webpage, which in December had 2,429 visitors.



Monthly Community Naloxone Trainings:

- February 6, 2024 5:00 - 6:00 PM
- March 5, 2024 9:00 - 10:00 AM
- April 2, 2024 5:00 - 6:00 PM
- May 7, 2024 9:00 - 10:00 AM
- June 4, 2024 5:00 - 6:00 PM

Upcoming QPR Suicide Prevention Training:

- February 2, 2024 11:00 - 12:00 PM

These trainings are in-person at 165 Miller Street. To register please call Elizabeth, Public Health Educator at (203) 630-4288 or email her at edemerchant@meridenct.gov.

Have questions about our Harm Reduction and Overdose Prevention and Response here in Meriden? Scan the QR code to visit our webpage or contact (203) 630-4221.

Don't have a QR code scanner? Visit <https://tinyurl.com/MeridenHarmRed>

