

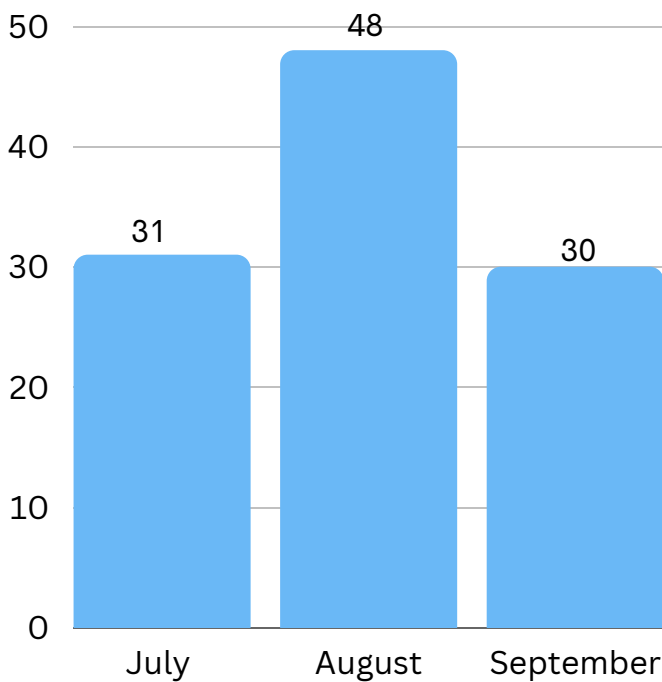
October 2023

MERIDEN HARM REDUCTION AND OVERDOSE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

CITY OF MERIDEN
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

LOOKING BACK...ACTIVITIES JULY - SEPTEMBER 2023

Number of Participants Narcan Trained



Over the last quarter we have trained over 100 people on how to respond to an opioid overdose and administer Narcan! Trainings are offered virtually on a monthly basis to all Meriden businesses/agencies and pop-up trainings are held at select community events.

In addition to our monthly trainings we did trainings at:

- Corner House Residential Care
- New Opportunities of Greater Meriden
- MidState Arc
- National Night Out
- Higher Movement Dance Studio
- Overdose Awareness Day
- In front of the Meriden Police Department
- Success Academy

QPR and Mental Health Presentations

QPR, or Question, Persuade, Refer is a suicide prevention training 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.

Over the last few months we have completed 3 trainings with 25 total participants. Trainings can be done in person or virtually and participants receive a certificate after the training as a "gatekeeper".

In August our Public Health Educator was also certified as a Mental Health First Aid Instructor - stay tuned for upcoming training opportunities!

Community Engagement

At National Night Out and Overdose Awareness Day in August we gathered feedback from the community about substance use and stigma. Our department, in partnership with Rushford and other community partners, have been working on a communications campaign on stigma around substance use as part of our IOPSSL grant with NACCHO (more information in the upcoming sections).

Post-It Note Project

At National Night Out and Overdose Awareness Day we asked the community to use post-it notes to assess stigma in our community using the following instructions:

- Use **PINK** if you have ever felt stigmatized
- Use **BLUE** if you or someone you know is a person who
- Use **PURPLE** if you have ever lost someone to overdose
- Use **GREEN** if you know how to administer Naloxone

Sharing a Message of Hope

At the same events we also gave people the opportunity to write down a message of hope for those who may be facing stigma in their lives and these were some of the responses:

"We are all proud of you and we love you."

"You are worth it. People care and you are loved"



Community Health Survey

In partnership with the New Haven Health Department (who is also an IOPSSL grant awardee) we created a bilingual community survey to gather information about public stigma regarding substance use disorder. This survey was available to the community August 17-31, 2023 and we had over 300 responses with 200 of them from the Meriden community!

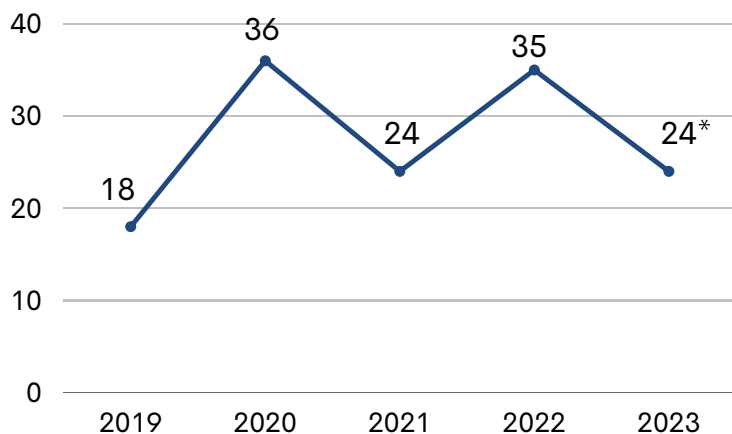
Outreach for the survey was done on social media, with the Record Journal, at the Meriden Public Library and Meriden Senior Center, and at community events.

From those results, we designed a social media campaign about substance use and gathered feedback from community partners on campaign materials that will be launching in November - stay tuned!



MERIDEN OVERDOSE DATA

Meriden Accidental Overdose Deaths



Source: Connecticut Office of the Chief Medical Examiner

*As of September 8, 2023

Did you know?
The CDC reports, "In CT 54.6% of overdose deaths, a potential bystander was present. Having Naloxone available allows bystanders to REVERSE an overdose and save lives".

UPCOMING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Monthly Virtual Trainings:

- November 1, 2023 9:00 - 10:00 AM
- December 6, 2023 5:30 - 6:30 PM

Virtual on Microsoft Teams. To register please call (203) 630-4288.

Pop-Up Training

- October 12, 2023 between 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

This will be at the Train Station in Meriden (60 State Street). The training takes less than 10 minutes! No appointments needed - just walk up!

NALOXONE - CARRY IT!

Naloxone, also known as Narcan, 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. Narcan restores someone's ability to breathe allowing time to access medical attention. Narcan can be administered into the muscle or as a nasal spray, which is fairly simple to administer and harmless if administered to an individual who is not overdosing.

See the dates above for upcoming trainings!

Everyone who attends a training gets a FREE Narcan kit and other prevention resources.

Meriden businesses who are interested in a Narcan Training receives an Overdose Emergency Kit Cabinet to store Naloxone in their facility. Call (203) 630-4288 to arrange your training.



UPCOMING OUTREACH EVENTS

- DEA Drug Take Back Day at the Meriden Police Department October 28, 2023
- Meriden Yulefest November 25, 2023
- Christmas in the Village in South Meriden December 2, 2023

WHAT IS HARM REDUCTION?

Harm reduction is defined as a set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with drug use. But to simplify what it means, harm reduction is about meeting people where they are at, and providing support and care for individuals who use substances.

Harm reduction can also lead a person to seek recovery services, through building trust and respecting the individual's dignity and autonomy.

Meriden has a program that distributes harm reduction materials and links persons to treatment and recovery resources. To learn more about the Meriden Opioid Referral for Recovery (MORR) program read below!

By using harm reduction strategies we are preventing overdose deaths and saving lives!



MERIDEN OPIOID REFERRAL FOR RECOVERY (MORR) PROGRAM

The Meriden Opioid Referral for Recovery (MORR) program started in 2018 through a grant provided by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). This program aims to provide individuals with linkage to care through referral by our Police and Fire Departments, and Hunters Ambulance to trained clinicians at Rushford for treatment and recovery services. The second component of the program is to implement prevention and harm reduction efforts including community trainings, harm reduction efforts, distribution of Naloxone to the community and first responders. and outreach at community events and identified areas in our city that may have seen a spike in overdose events.



The grant with SAMHSA ended September 29, 2022 and the program continues under the NACCHO IOPSLL grant below.

Implementing Overdose Prevention Strategies at the Local Level (IOPSLL) is a 15-month grant from the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) and helps our Department build capacity to implement overdose prevention and education strategies. Our 4 primary activities under this grant are 1) increase harm reduction outreach through community feedback, 2) provide anti-stigma training and resources, 3) strengthen our data collection and analysis around overdose trends in Meriden, and 4) reduce stigma around substance use through a communications campaign. We are also able to continue referrals to treatment and recovery services in partnership with our first responders and Rushford. This grant runs November 1, 2022 to January 31, 2024.

Call (203) 634-7416 to learn more about MORR! Or visit the website:

<https://rushford.org/addiction/morr>

MERIDEN DROP BOX - SAFE DISPOSAL

Have unwanted or expired medication in your home? Take it to the drop box in the lobby of the Meriden Police Department! It is available 24/7/365.

Our office also has Deterra Medication Disposal bags! These bags are an easy and environmental friendly way to dispose of medications. Each bag will hold 45 pills, or 6 oz. of liquid, or 6 patches.

Call (203) 630-4288 to request a medication disposal bag. These are also given out at community events we attend.



Have questions about our Harm Reduction and Overdose Prevention and Response here in Meriden? Scan the QR code to visit our webpage or contact Elizabeth our Public Health Educator at (203) 630-4288.

