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**For release: August 26, 2022**

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## **HIV Alliance to provide free virtual naloxone trainings on International Overdose Awareness Day**

Overdoses have reached an all-time high. The CDC recently reported that, during a twelve-month period ending in April 2021, the US reached a record 100,306 overdose deaths. The trend has also been observed locally, with recent spikes in overdoses across Oregon over the last few months.

Overdoses have become more common in Oregon primarily due to increased fentanyl contamination in the drug supply. Fentanyl is a highly potent and deadly synthetic opioid, which can be added to substances without the consumer's knowledge. In their 2021 summary, the Oregon Health Authority reports that across the state between 2019 and 2020, fentanyl-related overdoses increased by over three hundred percent.

According to local nonprofit HIV Alliance, improving widespread knowledge and availability of overdose prevention resources is key to addressing Oregon's opioid epidemic and ending overdose deaths. Naloxone, or Narcan, is an FDA-approved medication that can be administered to individuals who show signs of overdose. Naloxone is an opioid antagonist and is highly effective at rapidly reversing an overdose, including those related to fentanyl. Reports of multiple doses of naloxone being required has been increasingly common in recent years due to fentanyl's widespread presence.

Oregon law allows for any person to obtain the medication at a pharmacy and administer naloxone when necessary. HIV Alliance and other local service providers also provide the resource free of charge directly to people who use drugs. During 2021, HIV Alliance reports that their clients across seven Oregon counties reported over 900 overdose reversals using naloxone obtained through their agency.

International Overdose Awareness Day is observed annually on August 31 with the goal to raise awareness of overdose risk, reduce stigma associated with drug use, and remember those lost to drug overdose. HIV Alliance will be providing free overdose prevention trainings on August 31 via Zoom. Anyone can attend these trainings, which will include information on how to identify an overdose and administer naloxone. Additional details and Zoom meeting links are available at their website at [hivalliance.org](http://hivalliance.org).

*HIV Alliance Senior Program Director (Amanda McCluskey) and Executive Director (Renee Yandel) are available for interviews.*

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