

Meigs County is fifteenth in the state in the number of unintentional drug overdoses according to the April 2022 “Preliminary Data Summary: Ohio Unintentional Drug Overdose Deaths.” To obtain an accurate picture of what is happening within the county, the Meigs County Health Department collects data from Meigs County EMS quarterly. During 2020, a total of 74 overdose squad runs were conducted with 75 doses of Narcan administered. During 2021, those numbers increased to 139 runs with 82 doses given. Through June 30th this year, 44 runs have been completed with 36 doses of Narcan administered, and eight Meigs County residents have died due to overdose between January 1 and June 30, 2022.

The Meigs County Health Department operates harm reduction services by giving out FREE Project DAWN kits that are used to reverse opioid overdoses. In 2014, the MCHD Public Health Nurses were trained to not only administer Naloxone in the event of a suspected opioid overdose, but also to teach others how to recognize an opioid overdose and give the medication. As a result, the MCHD received its first Project DAWN kits, which contains two doses of Naloxone, two facemasks and a pair of nitrile gloves.

Naloxone is given through the nose, and what once was a difficult to assemble syringe/atomizer device is now a simple one-piece spray device similar to over-the-counter saline nasal spray. It is a safe medication that can reverse an overdose that is caused by an opioid drug, such as a prescription pain medication or heroin. It does not reverse overdoses that are caused by non-opioid drugs, such as cocaine, benzodiazepines (e.g., Xanax, Klonopin and Valium), methamphetamines, or alcohol. If Naloxone is administered to a person who is dependent on opioids, it will produce withdrawal symptoms, which is uncomfortable, but not life-threatening.

Our Public Health Nurses can train anyone aged 18 or older to respond to a suspected opioid overdose by recognizing the signs of an overdose and administering the medication. The training takes as little as 15 minutes and can be done with or without an appointment. Our nurses are also available to provide on-site training to groups, including businesses and first-responders.

If you would like more information on Project DAWN or would like to receive training and a free kit, please call the MCHD at 740-992-6626. Leanne Cunningham, MCHD Director of Nursing

