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Established in 1945, DuPage County Health Department promotes physical and emotional health; prevents illness injury and disability; protects health from environmental risk factors, and strives to assure the provision of accessible, quality service.

March 13, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DuPage Narcan Program Releases Annual Report: Increase in Opioid Related Deaths and Narcan Saves

DUPAGE COUNTY—The DuPage Narcan Program (DNP) has released its annual report and, according to Dr. Richard Jorgensen, DuPage County Coroner, the county saw a sharp increase in deaths and saves related to opioid overdoses.

There were 78 deaths and 145 saves related to opioid overdoses in 2016. The number of deaths attributed to fentanyl doubled, to 16 compared to 8 the previous year. A synthetic drug, fentanyl is 50 times more potent than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine.

“These numbers reveal that our work is not done in the quest to beat this epidemic,” Jorgensen said in the report. “We must continue to bring education to our citizens about this problem to prevent the misuse of opioids, treat those who are addicted and eradicate the supply of illegal drugs.”

The 78 opioid related deaths last year represent nearly half the total of the 162 deaths since 2014.

In an encouraging trend, leaders of many DNP program sites (police departments, schools, etc.) are now funding their supply of Narcan showing an increased commitment to reversing overdoses linked to heroin and other opioids.

The Village of Bloomingdale now funds the purchase of the Narcan spray for emergency responders.

“The DNP is making a difference and saving lives,” said Frank Giammarese, Bloomingdale police chief. “Providing local funds clearly demonstrates a commitment to combat the growing opioid epidemic in our community.”

Although the DNP was funded initially by the DuPage County Board of Health, the program now operates on private donations, grants, and local funding.

-More-

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As shown in the report, lives are saved through the use of the nasal spray Naloxone, also known as Narcan, which reverses the effects of heroin and other opioids. Since 2014, 3,143 individuals have been trained to administer naloxone among 60 program sites across DuPage County and the northern Illinois area.

These drug-free resources are available to DuPage County residents:

- **Rx Box** - drug disposal program aimed to reduce access to unused medications that may be misused or abused.
- **Project Connect** – a pilot program that offers linkage to support and treatment opportunities for those that have overdosed.
- **Heroin Anonymous (HA)** – offers support to individuals that would like to be drug-free and meets at the DuPage County Health Department Community Center.
- **Community Access to Naloxone** – Naloxone (Narcan) is available for individual use without a prescription at many pharmacies in DuPage County.

The DuPage Narcan Program was implemented in 2013 following a striking number of heroin deaths which prompted a call to action by local leaders, and was the first countywide overdose prevention program in Illinois to be approved by the Division of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (DASA).

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