



State of New York

Executive Chamber

Proclamation

Whereas, drug overdose is a serious public health concern and opioid-related overdose has increased as a health threat; since 2003, opioid analgesics have been responsible for more unintentional drug overdose deaths in the United States than cocaine and heroin combined, and the number of overdose deaths involving opioid analgesics more than tripled between 1999 and 2008; and

Whereas, in New York State nearly 2,051 fatalities resulting from overdoses were recorded in 2011 with a shift to a younger age group (20-34) and more than double the number in 2004, and this number reflects lethal overdose due to both prescription opioids and heroin; and

Whereas, since most overdoses are not immediate and are witnessed by others, many overdose fatalities are preventable, especially if the witnesses are prepared to respond by knowing specific risk factors, recognizing the signs of overdose, contacting emergency medical services, providing rescue breathing, and administering naloxone; and in 2011, New York State enacted a 911 Good Samaritan Law so that, in most circumstances, witnesses to overdoses can safely call for help without risk of prosecution and, in 2014, expanded these protections for those who administer an opioid antagonist, such as naloxone; and

Whereas, the NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) oversees one of the largest addiction services systems in the nation, accounting for more than 1,600 programs throughout the state; to help reduce the number of overdoses, OASAS coordinates with other state agencies and works in concert with practitioners and concerned citizens on initiatives, educational workshops, lectures, and tools to assist with raising awareness about this public health threat; and

Whereas, a life-saving New York State law makes it legal for non-medical persons to administer naloxone to another individual to prevent an opioid overdose from becoming fatal; established in 2006, the NYS Department of Health's Opioid Overdose Prevention Program encourages citizens to become aware of this law and to embrace its intended purpose of preventing death due to overdose and, since its creation, the Department has approved 170 programs and trained 15,000 community responders; as of this month, the 12 OASAS Addiction Treatment Centers have trained nearly 4,000 people on the use of naloxone, and OASAS, the NYS Department of Health, and the NYS Department of Criminal Justice Services have expanded a program to train first responders including police officers, firefighters, sheriffs' deputies, and emergency services personnel on the use of naloxone and helps those agencies to obtain naloxone at no cost; and

Whereas, a New York law went into effect on August 27, 2013 that helped combat prescription drug abuse and established stronger safeguards for the distribution of specific prescription drugs that are prone to abuse; the law created a "real time" prescription monitoring registry to provide timely and enhanced information to practitioners and pharmacists; the system has been used over 16,000,000 times since being established, leading to decreases in the prescribing of almost all opioids and leading to a 75% decrease in "doctor shopping" compared to the prior year; and

Whereas, in June 2014, a series of laws were enacted creating new initiatives and programs to combat New York's serious heroin and opioid epidemic, including measures to support addiction treatment; new tools, training, and resources for law enforcement to respond to drug overdoses and new penalties to help combat illegal drug distribution; improved accessibility to the overdose antidote naloxone; and expanded public education and drug prevention campaigns; with this intensified focus on the public health crisis that drug abuse and overdose present, we can turn the tide and save more lives every year;

Now, Therefore, I, Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York, do hereby proclaim August 31, 2014 as

OPIOID OVERDOSE PREVENTION DAY

in the Empire State.



Given under my hand and the Privy Seal of the State at the Capitol in the City of Albany this twenty-sixth day of August in the year two thousand fourteen.

Governor

Secretary to the Governor