

Overdose Alert for Barrie and Bracebridge Areas

Attention: Physicians, Emergency Departments, Nurse Practitioners, Walk-In Clinics/Urgent Care Clinics, Family Health Teams, County of Simcoe Paramedic Services, Medavie EMS Ontario – Muskoka, Rama Mnjikaning EMS, NSM LHIN, Central LHIN, Pharmacists

Date: February 28, 2018

Via surveillance data, the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) has detected a higher than usual number of suspected drug overdoses (opioid + unspecified drugs) at the Emergency Departments of the Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre (RVH) and the Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare - South Muskoka Memorial Hospital Site, and is therefore issuing an alert.

For the two week period from Monday February 12th to Sunday February 25nd, there were a total of 44 suspected unintentional drug overdose visits for all North Simcoe Muskoka hospitals combined. This was significantly higher than the comparable average for the previous eight-weeks, which was 25 suspected unintentional drug overdose visits per two-weeks. While Barrie and Bracebridge hospitals saw a particular increase, other communities in our region which have been affected by drug overdoses in recent months continued to be affected during this time.

The reason for the current spike in overdoses cannot be confirmed at this time, but bootleg Fentanyl in pill, patch or powder form is known to be present in the illicit drug market in communities throughout Simcoe and Muskoka. In Ontario, bootleg Fentanyl is being mixed into many popular street drugs such as cocaine, heroin, crystal meth, as well as being pressed into counterfeit prescription pills and being sold as Percocet and Oxycontin. Common street names include Faded 80's, K22's, A215's, Greenies, Green Beans, Beans, Green Apples, Apples, or Fake Oxy.

Health care providers are encouraged to advise patients of the following:

- Patients at risk of opioid overdose should learn about and carry naloxone
- Patients who use opioids recreationally should be advised to: use one drug at a time, or use less of each drug if mixing; test it...start with a small amount; never use alone; take turns using so someone can help if needed; and make a plan and know how to respond in case of an overdose
- Patients at risk for opioid overdose should be reminded that if an overdose is suspected or witnessed, they should immediately call 9-1-1, even if naloxone has been administered.

Patients can obtain naloxone kits for free from the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit <http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/Home.aspx>, by calling 705-721-7520, or visiting one of the offices. For office locations: <http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/HealthUnit/Contact.aspx>.

Naloxone can also be accessed for free at participating pharmacies:
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/where-get-free-naloxone-kit>