

Overdose Alert for Barrie Area

Attention: Physicians, Emergency Departments, Nurse Practitioners, Walk-In Clinics/Urgent Care Clinics, Family Health Teams, County of Simcoe Paramedic Services, NSM LHIN, Pharmacists

Date: August 15, 2017

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) has received a surveillance alert regarding a higher than usual number of drug overdoses (opioid + unspecified) at the Royal Victoria Hospital (RVH) ER.

Specifically, between August 9th and 13th, there were 22 overdoses passing through RVH triage - 1 mentioned 'Oxy', 8 mentioned 'Heroin' and 13 were unspecified 'Overdoses'. Prior to this five-day period, the maximum number of overdose visits for any given five-day period was 15. While SMDHU is monitoring for opioids in particular, the health unit is also including unspecified overdoses in order to capture opioid overdoses from inadvertent consumption of an opioid mixed in other drugs.

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 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/get-naloxone-kits-free>