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Local leaders team up for international overdose awareness day

Lynchburg, VA – Fatal drug overdose remains the leading method of unnatural death in Virginia, with recent data revealing that 76.5% of these deaths are due to fentanyl, a synthetic opioid that is up to 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine ([VDH](#)) ([DEA](#)). In response, local leaders in Lynchburg are teaming up in support of the international movement that is recognizing and responding to the rise in overdose deaths. In allied partnership, the Blue Ridge Emergency Medical Services Council, Central Virginia Health District, Centra Healthcare, Horizon Behavioral Health, and the Lynchburg Police Department will lead a panel discussion on Wednesday, August 31st, to raise awareness and educate the community on resources available for individuals who may be at risk of unintentional overdose. Members of the local community will give voice to the impact overdose is having on our community while Dr. Gately of the Central Virginia Health District will lend expert insight on the landscape of overdose in the Central Virginia region. **The event will be held at the Pearson Cancer Center located at 1701 Thomson Dr. Lynchburg, VA 24501, from 10:00am to 11:00am.**

Dr. Kerry Gately, Director of the Central Virginia Health District, emphasizes the importance of overdose awareness with a reminder that "Overdoses are occurring more frequently. Anyone can overdose, and an overdose can happen anywhere, at any time." He also shared "I support IOAD [International Overdose Awareness Day] because our communities need to understand how and why overdoses happen, and what can be done about overdoses and substance use disorders in general."

Community members are invited to support the cause by participating in Virginia's rapid REVIVE overdose response training which will be offered at a variety of locations from 12:00pm - 2:00pm and 5:00pm - 7:00pm on Wednesday, August 31st, 2022. Narcan will also be provided to all who are trained at participating locations:

- Pearson Cancer Center, 1701 Thomson Dr. Lynchburg, VA 24501
- Central Virginia Department of Health, 307 Alleghany Ave. Lynchburg, VA 24501
- Timberlake Health and Wellness, 20276 Timberlake Rd. Lynchburg, VA 24502

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Horizon Behavioral Health has been the primary public behavioral healthcare provider in the Region 2000 area for more than 53 years. In the last year, Horizon provided services to approximately 12,000 adults and children, addressing problems with mental health, substance use and intellectual disabilities. Horizon is accredited by CARF International. This represents the highest level of accreditation that can be given to a behavioral health organization.