



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HKLN Drug Strategy Recognizes International Overdose Awareness Day

Local events taking place to honour those impacted by and lost to drug poisonings.

(August 7, 2024) – The [Haliburton, Kawartha Lakes Northumberland \(HKLN\) Drug Strategy](#) recognizes August 31st as [International Overdose Awareness Day](#), the world's largest annual campaign to end drug poisonings, to honour without stigma those impacted and those who have died and acknowledge the grief of the family and friends left behind. This year's theme is *'Together We Can'*, highlighting the power of our community to effect change when we work together.

The day was established in 2001 by Australians Sally J. Finn and Peter Streker to commemorate those who have lost their lives to drug poisonings, those who continue to face risk including death and harm by the unregulated toxic drug supply and to support the loved ones whose lives have been affected by substance use. Since 2012, the responsibility of organizing *International Overdose Awareness Day* has been taken over by the Penington Institute, an Australian non-profit health organization and is now observed all over the world.

International Overdose Awareness Day brings attention to an ongoing public health emergency due to an unregulated toxic drug supply and stimulates action and discussion about evidence-based drug poisoning prevention initiatives and drug policy reform. The campaign also acknowledges the profound grief felt by families and friends whose loved ones have died or suffered permanent injury from drug poisoning.

"While every individual action matters greatly, coming together as a community creates a powerful collective action," said Natasha James, Integrated Care Hub Coordinator for the John Howard Society of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton. "One that moves us with greater speed toward our shared goal of preventing, and ultimately, ending all overdoses."

The HKLN Drug Strategy would like to encourage members of the public, local agencies and community organizations to participate by sharing social media posts in support of *International Overdose Awareness Day* or attending the following events to show support:

International Overdose Awareness Day & Butterfly Release Ceremony in Lindsay

Date: Friday, August 30, 2024. | Time: 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Location: Victoria Park, 190 Kent Street West, Lindsay, ON

The John Howard Society of Kawartha Lakes & Haliburton will be hosting a community event with several other organizations offering educational activities focused on addiction awareness along with a Butterfly Release Ceremony at 1 p.m. to honour those directly or indirectly impacted by addiction.

OUR VISION

The HKLN Drug Strategy strives for supportive and safe environments that promote the health and resiliency of individuals, families and communities, and reduce the harms and stigma associated with substance use.



Candlelight Vigil in Cobourg

Date: Saturday, August 31, 2024, from 8-9 p.m.

Location: In front of Victoria Hall, 55 King Street West, Cobourg

Moms Stop the Harm, PARN, HKPR District Health Unit, ONPUD, CMHA HKPR, TweakEasyCBG, Healing Hearts Northumberland and Holding Hope Northumberland are hosting a candlelit vigil to honour all those affected by and lost to the unregulated toxic drug supply.

Community Memorial and Awareness Event in Cobourg

Date: Saturday, August 31, 2024, from 10:45 a.m.-4 p.m.

Location: In front of Victoria Hall, 55 King Street West, Cobourg

The International Overdose Awareness Day flag will be raised to half and activities will include free Naloxone training, a community memorial project and information sharing about harm reduction strategies and resources. Hosted by Moms Stop the Harm, PARN, HKPR District Health Unit, ONPUD, CMHA HKPR, TweakEasyCBG, Healing Hearts Northumberland and Holding Hope Northumberland

Port Hope Police Station Lowering of Flag

Date: Friday, August 30, 2024, at 9:30 a.m.

The Port Hope Police Service will be lowering their flag to half mast for a moment of silence to acknowledge the profound grief felt by families and friends whose loved ones have died or suffered permanent injury from drug poisoning.

"You are not alone, we are all in this together," said Dane Record, Chair of the HKLN Drug Strategy. "We want to provide an opportunity for people to publicly mourn the loss of loved ones and to help spread the message about the impacts of drug poisoning, and that drug overdose and death from such is preventable."

For More Information

- Visit the International Overdose Awareness Day, A Penington Institute Initiative [webpage](#)
- CAMH Library: [Resources for International Overdose Awareness Day, August 31](#)
- Visit the John Howard Society of Kawartha Lakes & Haliburton's [webpage](#)
- Visit the [HKLN Drug Strategy](#) to learn more about current harm reduction efforts

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