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September 14, 2023

Public Health Alert – Aqua Fentanyl Overdoses in Thunder Bay

Situation

Northwestern Health Unit is aware that Aqua Fentanyl has been linked to multiple overdoses in Thunder Bay. The Aqua Fentanyl was related to use of both Fentanyl (opioid) and Benzodiazepines (not an opioid). When someone uses and opioid, with or without knowing, they can overdose.

Overdose symptoms

- the person can't be woken up
- choking, gurgling, or snoring sounds
- slow, weak, or no breathing
- drowsiness or difficulty staying awake
- slow heart rate, irregular heart rate, or no heartbeat

What can service providers do?

- Have naloxone on you when working with people who use unregulated drugs. Although naloxone is ineffective on non-opioid drugs, it can provide help in the event a person uses without knowing an opioid is present.
- ALWAYS administer naloxone if you suspect an opioid overdose, there is no harm in administering it to someone who has not used an opioid.
- Become a naloxone distribution site so that you can give naloxone kits to people at risk of overdose, and their friends and family (contact NWHU).
- Talk often about getting help such as treatment and refer to local agencies when able.

Messages for people using drugs

- Try not to use alone. Buddy up with someone you trust.
- If you must use alone, have a safety plan:
  - Get someone to check on you in person or by phone.
  - Call National Overdose Response Service at **1-888-688-NORS (6677)** while using alone.
  - Use the Lifeguard app.

- Get naloxone and know how to use it.
- When using with others, do not use at the same time. Make sure the other person is OK before you use.
- Call 911 if you think it's an overdose. The *Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act* gives some legal protection

Need more information?

- Fentanyl - Canada.ca

Call your local NWHU if you need naloxone or want to become a naloxone distribution site.

Contact

Dr. Kit Young Hoon
Medical Officer of Health
Northwestern Health Unit