

Joint Statement

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STATE’S ATTORNEY MOSSER, SHERIFF HAIN, CORONER RUSSELL APPLAUD FREE NARCAN DISTRIBUTION AT LIGHTHOUSE RECOVERY IN ST. CHARLES

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Narcan is now available to the public by Lighthouse Recovery Center, a local substance use disorder treatment provider, located at 210 S. 5th St. in downtown St. Charles.

Lighthouse Recovery has placed a Narcan vending machine outside its St. Charles clinic. Narcan, the commercial name for naloxone, is used to treat an opioid overdose emergency, rapidly reversing the opioid’s effects. The free Narcan in the vending machine is in the form of nasal spray. It is available 24 hours a day, every day. Instructions for how to use Narcan are included. Narcan is harmless if administered to someone who is not overdosing.

“Free, 24-hour access to this life-saving medication is essential to reducing the overdose death rate in our communities,” said Nathan Lanthrum, clinical director and co-owner of Lighthouse Recovery. “It has saved the lives of countless friends and family members over the years and should be readily available to anybody who needs it, regardless of their ability or desire to access services in any other capacity. When someone is treated in this fashion – with compassion instead of shame – it could give them that one last chance to realize that help is out there and start them toward the path of recovery.”

The free Narcan is available to everyone. A person does not have to be a Lighthouse client or patient to access it. Further, the vending machine is not monitored so individuals can obtain Narcan anonymously.

“I hope this is the first of many free, round-the-clock Narcan distribution efforts in Kane County,” Kane County State’s Attorney Jamie Mosser said. “I’m grateful to Nathan Lanthrum and the Lighthouse Recovery staff, whose work benefits the entire community. We have seen first-hand that Narcan has saved the lives of people overdosing including police officers who have been exposed to drugs while investigating crimes. Offering easier access to Narcan is one of the many ways we can help those in our community with substance use disorder.”

Health Department Director Michael Isaacson said it’s about saving lives.

“Addressing substance use is complex, but one easy thing all of us should do is learn to administer Narcan and make sure it is widely available,” Director Isaacson said. “Programs like this one at Lighthouse save people’s lives.”

Naloxone is highly effective. Research conducted by Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston showed that when given naloxone, 93.5% of people survive their overdose.

“We’ve learned over the years that providing widespread public access to Narcan is an essential lifesaving tool. It is no surprise that Lighthouse continues to be the community leader in substance use preventive care,” Sheriff Ron Hain said.

According to the most recent data available from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, opioid overdose deaths increased from 21,089 in 2010 to 80,411 in 2021.

Kane County had a combined 156 opioid-related deaths in 2021 and 2022.

“Yes, I absolutely am in favor of having a Narcan vending machine in Kane County,” Kane County Coroner Rob Russell said. “I would actually advocate for more. I know the argument has been made that this enables people to continue using and should not be encouraged. This is a fallacy. [A recent study](#) by the University of Cincinnati revealed that nearly 1,000 people have been saved from naloxone that was acquired from a vending machine. Kane County has had 78 deaths each of the last two years due to opioid poisoning. This year we do not anticipate a reduction of those numbers. We are actually on pace this year to surpass that number. My hope is that we will see a reduction with the implementation of this Narcan vending machine. Hamilton County, Ohio, saw a 10% decline in fatal overdoses. That excites me!”

The Kane County Health Department is hosting a free Narcan drive-through distribution event on Thursday, August 31, from noon to 2 p.m. and from 5 to 7 p.m. at 1240 N. Highland Ave., Aurora. August 31 is International Overdose Awareness Day.

The Health Department has additional free Narcan distribution events throughout Kane County scheduled through the remainder of the year, which can be viewed [on its website](#). For more information about how to obtain free Narcan with instructions for use from the Health Department, go to <https://kanehealth.com/Pages/Opioid/How-to-Obtain-Naloxone.aspx>.