



PRESS RELEASE- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

International Overdose Awareness Day Event

8/14/2020

The City of Bristol Department of Parks, Recreation, Youth and Community Services will be hosting an International Overdose Awareness Day (IOAD) on Monday August 31st from 4:00-7:00pm at Brackett Park. The program is being sponsored by the Drug Free Communities BEST (Bristol Eliminating Substance Abuse Together) program in conjunction with the Mayor's Opioid Task Force to recognize and address the tragic reality of drug overdose.

The event will include tributes written to honour loved ones that have been lost to drug overdose. These tributes can be kept, shared, or attached to a balloon which will be released in solidarity. Free substance use and mental health-related resources will also be available from organizations in the community. Please remember to wear a mask as social distancing guidelines are still in effect.

The Change the Script Resource Van will be handing out medication lockboxes and disposal kits along with other substance use-related resources and materials. Change the Script is a Connecticut-based prescription drug misuse prevention campaign funded by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. An overdose Remembrance Quilt, in which community members are invited to create a square in memory of their loved ones, will also be displayed.

Program Coordinator Jenelle Howard stated, "International Overdose Awareness Day (IOAD) is observed in communities across the world on the 31st of August every year. The focus of the day is to create better understanding of overdose, reduce the stigma of drug-related deaths, and create change that reduces the harms associated with drug use."

Project Associate Thomas Fulton stated, "The number of people who died in Connecticut from drug overdoses in 2019 was the most the state has recorded in a single year. The majority of which involved fentanyl and/or fentanyl analogues. With life-saving measures like the overdose reversal drug Naloxone and increased awareness around other harm reduction approaches like safe medication storage and disposal, there is still hope for a better future."

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Mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu reflected, “Overdose can effect anybody and one of the messages of this day is that the people who overdose are our sons, daughters, mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters – they are loved and they are missed. We encourage members of the community with lived experience to come to our event and to stand in solidarity with the men and women who have been personally affected by overdose.”

For more information please contact Program Coordinator Jenelle Howard at 860-584-6160 or jenellehoward@bristolct.gov

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