



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RE: Deputy-Mayor Sheila Christie declares Aug. 31 Overdose Awareness Day

AMHERST, Nova Scotia – A proclamation declaring Aug. 31 Overdose Awareness Day in the Town of Amherst, was proclaimed by Deputy-Mayor Sheila Christie during a noon-hour ceremony in Victoria Square that was held in conjunction with the Cumberland Opioid Council and Northern Healthy Connections Society.

Citing a national report on apparent opioid-related deaths in Canada released in June that indicated that 92 per cent of the 3,987 opioid-related deaths in 2017 were accidental, Christie said the Town of Amherst is aware of the opioid crisis that is affecting every corner of the country.

“It is why the town’s police and fire departments, thanks to the provincial government, have been issued naloxone kits, which are used to counteract overdoses,” Christie said. “Our police officers and first responders have also been given the training needed to use them”

The deputy-mayor said the opioid overdose crisis can best be combatted through awareness.

“That is why days like International Overdose Awareness Day are important, because it is



Megan Netzke, of the Northern Healthy Connections Society, shows Amherst Deputy-Mayor Sheila Christie a take-home Naloxone kit moments before Christie declared Aug. 31 Overdose Awareness Day in Amherst. (Town of Amherst photo)



through days like today that we can help people become aware of the situation.”

The proclamation read by Christie called on citizens to “recognize that every human being is worthy of our best efforts to prevent injury and death from overdose,” to support overdose prevention efforts and to support families of overdose victims by reinforcing “the inherent belief that no one should feel shame or disgrace due to an overdose-related death of a loved one.”

The ceremony also heard from Dr. Ryan Sommers, medical officer of health for the northern zone, who said tackling the opioid issue is very complicated.

Sommers pointed out that last summer the Health Department introduced the Nova Scotia Opioid Use and Overdose Framework, a document that is the pathway to prevention over the next few years. The Framework, he said, details the need for understanding the problem, awareness and education, as well as ensuring the proper use and prescribing of opioids.

Another major part of the framework is harm reduction, “which is evident in our take-home naloxone program and our needle distribution program in the northern zone,” he added.

A moment of silence was held to remember those who have died as a result of opioid misuse.

The Northern Healthy Connections Society also had a display of take-home naloxone kits and were providing training on their use for those who wished to take one home with them.

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