



For Immediate Release: January 24, 2024

The North Country Health Consortium (NCHC) sends our deepest condolences to the loved ones of the individuals who tragically passed away in a suspected **triple fatal overdose incident** on January 21, 2024.

In response to this devastating loss of life and the ongoing dangers of substance use in the North Country, NCHC urgently reminds the community that **resources do exist** to help ease risks and treat substance use disorder **without judgement**.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Substance use refers to the consumption of alcohol, illegal drugs, medications, or toxic substances that can lead to health issues, substance use disorders, and self-destructive behaviors despite negative consequences (2023). **Today, substance use is more treacherous than ever before.** Even occasional, recreational use can lead to **overdose and death**.

No single substance can be considered completely safe anymore. **Both chronic and occasional use now carry unpredictable yet increased dangers.** However, through education, harm reduction strategies, connection to support services and access to lifesaving resources like Naloxone and Fentanyl test strips, we can take action to stop further devastation in our community and protect more lives going forward.

We urge all community members to get involved according to their relationship to substance use:

- If you use substances recreationally.
- If you feel you have lost control over your usage.
- If you don't use substances, but your loved one does.

We must stand together, look out for one another, and make use of resources within reach of our community. We must have **open and judgement-free conversations** to break down the stigma surrounding substance use that prevents many individuals in our



community from asking for help. Visit www.askpetra.org (or scan the QR code) to access lifesaving tools such as Naloxone and Fentanyl test strips, and find recovery supports. There are 4 ways to access AskPETRA resources: You can text “TALK” to **(603) 259-4820**, call **(603) 259-1729** for confidential guidance and support, email AskPETRA@nchcnh.org, or web chat by clicking the link on the website. AskPETRA also provides essential family support services.

General community resources are also available for those in need, including:

- 211 Helpline
- The Doorway at Littleton Regional Healthcare (603) 259-1659
- The Doorway at Androscoggin Valley Hospital (603) 342-5000
- Recovery Coach Jamie Allaire at the Littleton Police Department (603) 444-7711 ext. 4951
- GROW: Groveton Recovery Outreach and Wellness
- Northumberland Police Department provides a recovery-oriented policing model. Contact the police department directly or contact Michelle, the Recovery Coach, at (603) 449-4167.

Though the path forward may be challenging, NCHC strongly believes in the power of our community to face this hardship with **empathy, honesty, and resilience**. Through education and understanding spread across a series of awareness articles to be released in the coming weeks, **we have the power to save lives.**



www.askpetra.org