



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Take Action, Save Lives:
Save One Life Kits Available from NCHC's AskPETRA Program**

Littleton, NH (February 9, 2024) - The opioid crisis has devastated communities across the country, taking far too many lives too soon. Here in the North Country, many beloved family members, friends, and neighbors have been lost to the tragic consequences of Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) and accidental overdose. But the trajectory can be changed, and lives can be saved through community action.

To empower the community to act, North Country Health Consortium's (NCHC) program, AskPETRA, has Save One Life Kits available at locations throughout the region. Each kit contains: 1 Naloxone package (2 doses), 1 CPR shield, 2 pairs of gloves, 2 Fentanyl test strips, alcohol prep pads, information on connecting to AskPETRA, and tips on safer substance use and harm reduction.

Naloxone, a medication that rapidly reverses opioid overdose, is a key component of the kits. With two easy-to-use doses on hand, lives can be saved if Naloxone is administered during overdose. Some signs of opioid overdose include loss of consciousness, blue/purple tinge to lighter skin or grey/ashen tinge to darker skin, pinpoint pupils, slow or no pulse, and inability to speak. Additional access to Naloxone is available at The Doorway at Androscoggin Valley Hospital and the Doorway at Littleton Regional Hospital.

Also included are Fentanyl test strips. These test strips allow individuals to check substances for the presence of Fentanyl, a potent synthetic opioid contributing to many overdoses. Using these strips can help prevent accidental Fentanyl exposure.

Xylazine, or "tranq", a veterinary sedative infiltrating the illegal drug supply, mixes with substances like Fentanyl and is not reversed by Naloxone. However, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) recommends administering Naloxone in any event where an overdose is suspected to help stabilize the individual until help can arrive. Although Xylazine test strips are not included in Save One Life kits, AskPETRA has them available to help identify this substance and prevent potentially fatal drug poisoning.

Save One Life Kits are currently available at various locations across the North Country. In Colebrook, kits can be found at Upper Connecticut Valley Hospital. In Northumberland, they are at the Northumberland Police Department and Northumberland Town Hall. Berlin has kits available at The Shed, the Family Resource Center, Middle Earth, and the Berlin Police Department. The town of Bath has kits at the Bath Public Library. In Woodsville, kits are located at the Curt N' Rod. Littleton has several locations with Save One Life Kits, including the Littleton Police Department, The Littleton Food Co-Op, Aylakai, The Loading



Dock, and The Shed at Serenity Center. Anyone anywhere, can also request a kit through AskPETRA. These locations across the North Country make Save One Life Kits readily available for those who may need them.

It's important to note that it is not just about the kits themselves. The community must also foster education, understanding, and openness around substance use to make a lasting difference. Silence and stigma only lead to more suffering and loss. AskPETRA provides critical education and support around prevention, treatment, and recovery.

Most importantly, AskPETRA offers crucial harm reduction strategies to keep people safer. Such as, use sterile injecting supplies, take care of your veins, take your time, carry Naloxone, call 911 immediately if you suspect an overdose, don't use opioids alone, and seek care and make changes to reduce your risk of overdose. Together, through education, support, and access to life-saving tools, the North Country community can slow down and reverse the devastating impacts of this opioid epidemic.

If this crisis has impacted someone in this community, know that they don't have to face it alone. Help, hope, and healing are available. AskPETRA has caring Community Health Workers/Recovery Coaches ready to listen, provide support, and connect to resources. All done confidentially and at no cost. Reach out to start the journey in any of these ways:

- Text "TALK" to (603) 259-4820.
- Call the AskPETRA phone line at (603) 259-1729 to speak with someone directly.
- Email AskPETRA@nchcnh.org and you'll get a prompt, confidential response.
- Webchat anonymously on AskPETRA's website.

These services are available Monday-Friday 8am-4:30pm.

By carrying Naloxone, distributing Save One Life Kits, spreading awareness of harm reduction strategies, and working together as a community, the North Country can save lives and provide support to those impacted.