

Hudson Police Sound Alarm as Overdose Deaths Spike In Columbia County

Three residents died of suspected overdoses in a week, including two within the city of Hudson

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Greener Pathways' mobile outreach team offers Narcan kits and other drug user support in Chatham, N.Y. Greener Pathways

HUDSON — Local police urged caution after three Columbia County residents died of suspected overdoses in a week, including two people within the city of Hudson, officials said.

"While we have not yet received confirmation indicating the presence of a 'bad batch' or contaminated substances, we are urging the public to remain vigilant," the Hudson Police Department said Sunday in a statement.

It was unclear whether the deaths were caused by fentanyl, a synthetic opioid responsible for an estimated 80,000 American deaths last year. The county's Department of Health did not immediately respond to a request for an interview.

"It's very upsetting, especially in Hudson, where they are so close to the hospital," said Hannah Calhoun, executive director of the Columbia-Greene Addiction Coalition. "I feel terrible for the families."

Calhoun didn't know the circumstances surrounding the overdoses but said a change in the local drug supply could have caused the spike, noting that the region is seeing more illicit drugs laced with fentanyl, sedatives and other additives linked to overdoses. While the region had "made a lot of strides" toward preventing drug deaths since the pandemic, when Greene County led the state in per capita fatal overdoses, the recent deaths showed that greater awareness of how to access the overdose-reversal medication naloxone is needed "on a community level," Calhoun said.

A vending machine on Union Street in Hudson distributes naloxone, packaged as a nasal spray under the name Narcan, and other overdose prevention supplies like fentanyl test strips. Narcan is also available over the counter at drug stores and is approved for use without a prescription.

"No one should not be able to access supplies," Calhoun said.

Thirty-five people in Columbia County have died of overdoses since 2018, most from heroin and prescription drugs, according to the county Public Health Department's overdose tracking dashboard.

Overdose deaths slowed in recent years after surging during the COVID-19 pandemic. But drug casualties remain so common that they are driving down the nation's life expectancy, according to the National Center for Health Statistics.

Hudson police called the recent overdose deaths "a sobering reminder of the dangers posed by illicit drugs in our community" and encouraged those struggling with addiction to seek help by calling Columbia County's Pathways to Recovery line at 877-467-3365.