For Immediate Release

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Photos from 2024 Save a Life Day

One of WV's overdose solutions becomes 50-state event, Hendersonville, NC joins Save A Life Day

After ranking highest in overdose rates for years, West Virginia recently reported a 42% decline in overdose fatalities during 2024. A grassroots initiative, Save A Life Day, may have contributed to this decline. Now, West Virginians have invited the entire country to be part of this life-saving anti-stigma movement.

On September 25, 2025, all 50 states will be hosting free naloxone events for Save a Life Day for the first time – with over 500 events already covering the map. A list of participating states and counties can be found at www.soarwv.org/save.

Naloxone, more well known by one of its brand names, Narcan, is an easy-to-use nasal spray that works to reverse opioid overdoses. Since it was approved by the FDA over 50 years ago, this formerly prescription-only medication became an over-the-counter medication in 2023.

That same year, overdose fatality rates began to drop nationwide. By 2024, the CDC reported an almost 27% decline in fatalities across the nation. Although many factors contributed, naloxone access is a key piece of the puzzle.

"The work that Save A Life Day organizers do every day: harm reduction, prevention, substance use treatment, recovery, housing, mutual aid, community outreach, and healthcare… These are all integral pieces of the puzzle too. Save a Life Day is about celebrating where the real change happens every other day of the year," said Caroline Wilson, Save A Life Day Coordinator for the nonprofit SOAR, WV.

Since 2021, SOAR, WV has been coordinating this event, growing it from a two-county pilot in West Virginia, to a fully national day of action in 2025. "It feels special, and extra meaningful that Save a Life Day started right here in the heart of the nation's overdose crisis, and continues to be tended by it. People who've faced so much loss have a drive for giving back that can't be measured," noted Joe Solomon, SOAR WV's Co-Director. "Wherever you are–if you've been touched by this crisis: you've got vital to share."

More than just a one-day event, Save A Life Day promotes year-round low-barrier naloxone access by providing tools that communities can use year round. This year, 55 free naloxone

vending boxes, sponsored by CareSource, are currently being shipped to Save a Life Day organizers across the country. Most are destined for high-traffic outdoor locations where people will be able to access the antidote for free, 24/7. “Whether the numbers go up or down, we are going to keep pushing for widespread naloxone access until we get to overdose zero,” said Sarah Stone, SOAR’s other Co-Director.

Thanks to additional sponsors, each participating county will also be shipped several emergency naloxone wall boxes, which can be placed on any wall, like an AED or first aid kit. The West Virginia Drug Intervention Institute will also be sending ONEbox™ emergency opioid overdose reversal kits to Save a Life Day Organizers.

Challenging stigma and changing hearts and minds is also a major mission of the day, according to Stone. “Save a Life Day is about connection. It’s about building trust, having real conversations, and showing up for each other. If one life is saved, all the effort is worth it,” she shares. Most Save A Life Day events are powered by dozens of volunteers that care deeply about this issue: people in recovery, people who have lost loved ones, and others who have seen the impact in their communities.

Naloxone pick-up sites often include churches, clinics, libraries, colleges, recovery homes, gas stations, fire departments, groceries, parks, and local dollar stores. According to Wilson, “A number of counties also implement outreach teams to distribute naloxone. We’ve also seen awareness walks, service offerings, resource fairs, and this year there will even be an ATV ride in Alabama! This year’s theme is ‘Mutual Aid Saves Lives,’ and I’ve heard from organizers many excellent plans to incorporate ways to help one another into their events.”

Major sponsors of the day include: CareSource, Healing Appalachia, Matthew Perry Foundation, and the Drug Intervention Institute & ONEbox™. A full list of sponsors can be found at: www.soarwv.org/save.

Location for Henderson County will be Jackson Park, Shelter 1 801 4th Avenue E, Hendersonville NC 28792.

All attendees will receive one naloxone kit, an in-person training, and information about local resources.

“We’re honored to host Save a Life Day here in our county. This event is about more than handing out supplies—it’s about protecting our neighbors, supporting one another, and reminding our community that every life is worth saving. We’re deeply grateful to the volunteers whose compassion and dedication make this possible.” Lexie Wilkins, Executive Director of Love and Respect Community for Recovery and Wellness.

Across the country, organizers plan to distribute over 100,000 naloxone doses throughout the day. Each location is powered by local volunteers who attended training to be able to participate. There are more than 250 volunteers for this year’s event in Henderson County.

People who use drugs, their family members and friends, community members and anyone who wants to be prepared to save a life are welcome to get trained on September 25, 2025. The training takes just 5-10 minutes and people can show up anytime from 3-7pm. Love and Respect Community for Recovery and Wellness is serving as the lead contact for Save a Life Day in Henderson County, with Vaya Health, Families Anonymous, VBOT, Thrive, Henderson County Adult Recovery Court, Safelight, Pisgah Legal Services, Mountain Vista Recovery, Deep

Time, Sunrise Community for Recovery and Wellness, Operation Gateway, Care Coalition, Hendersonville Pride, Full Circle Community Wellness, serving as key partners.

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