

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**April 20, 2023****Media Contact:** Allison Balmes-John, allison.balmes@vdh.virginia.gov**No-Cost Naloxone to be Available at Local Health Departments in the Rappahannock Area Health District**

(Fredericksburg, Va.) – The Rappahannock Area Health District (RAHD) is pleased to announce it will begin distributing naloxone at no charge at local health department locations beginning next week. Naloxone is a life-saving drug that can rapidly reverse an opioid overdose in adults and children.

Community members will be able to come to the front desk at any health department site during business hours and receive a free Rapid REVIVE training to understand how to administer naloxone. After completing the training, they will receive a kit containing two doses of naloxone nasal spray. The entire process should only take about 10-15 minutes.

“Our goal is to remove as many barriers as possible so that this life-saving drug can be widely available in our community,” said RAHD Medical Reserve Corps Coordinator Anthony Salgado, who is the lead RAHD REVIVE Trainer. “By bringing it to the local health departments, we are trying to make it convenient for community members to pick it up. We have removed the cost barrier, and by providing Rapid REVIVE training we are making sure community members have the knowledge needed to properly administer naloxone.”

Each health department site will have a kick-off event according to the following schedule:

- Tuesday, April 25: Caroline Health Department, 17202 Richmond Turnpike, Milford
- Thursday, April 27: King George Health Department, 8097 Kings Highway, King George
- Monday, May 1: Stafford Health Department, 1300 Courthouse Road, Stafford
- Wednesday, May 3: Fredericksburg Health Department, 608 Jackson Street, Fredericksburg
- Friday, May 5: Spotsylvania Health Department, 9104 Courthouse Road, Spotsylvania

Each kick-off event will take place from 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. Following the kick-off events, Rapid REVIVE training and no cost naloxone will be available Monday-Friday from 8:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. at each local health department.

Opioid-related deaths have been rising across Virginia in recent years, including in RAHD. In 2017, 58 deaths by opioid drug overdose were reported in RAHD. In 2021, this number had risen to 135.

“The opioid epidemic was in many ways overshadowed by the COVID-19 pandemic for the past three years, but this does not mean the problem went away,” said Dr. Olugbenga Obasanjo, health director for the RAHD. “Opioid abuse and overdose remain complex issues to address. RAHD is pleased to expand naloxone availability in the community, and we look forward to ongoing partnership with other community organizations as we work to address this issue.”

Additional opioid data is available at www.vdh.virginia.gov/opioid-data/data, and additional information about naloxone is available at www.vdh.virginia.gov/epidemiology/naloxone. For more information about the Rappahannock Area Health District, visit www.vdh.virginia.gov/rappahannock or call 540-899-4797.

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