



Fentanyl Test Strips Distribution Program

Helping Vermonters reduce their risk of opioid overdose

Alcohol & Drug Abuse Programs

December 2019

The Vermont Health Department, Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs is funding the distribution of fentanyl test strips, through Vermont's Syringe Service Programs, to help Vermonters reduce their risk of opioid overdose pursuant to Legislative appropriation in H.542 (Act 72).

KEY POINTS

- Fentanyl is present in three out of four opioid-related overdose deaths
- Fentanyl test strips can help reduce overdose

Why are fentanyl test strips helpful to Vermonters?

Opioid overdose deaths involving fentanyl continue to increase.

Fentanyl was found in three out of four opioid-related accidental and undetermined fatalities in 2018 (compared to 69% in 2017). The number of fatalities involving fentanyl has nearly tripled since 2015.

Relevant literature and Vermont data reviews indicate that most people modify their use of heroin when fentanyl is detected. By providing people who use heroin with fentanyl test strips, their risk of overdose can be reduced.

What is the goal of the program?

The goal of the program is to distribute fentanyl test strips to areas in the state with highest overdose death rates, including those with highest percentage of fentanyl involvement, and to people who are pregnant or parenting that use heroin.

What are the program's priorities for the next year?

- Develop agreements with and distribute fentanyl test strips to relevant organizations across the state
- Create a data reporting agreement with Health Surveillance
- Evaluate effectiveness of the fentanyl test strips pilot program on overdose rates
- Develop a distribution and tracking system in collaboration with other Health Department Divisions, including Health Surveillance and Emergency Preparedness, Response and Injury Prevention and Vermont's Syringe Service Program.

Fentanyl test strips can help reduce opioid overdose deaths.

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