



Department of Public Health

Monroe County, New York

Adam J. Bello
County Executive

Michael D. Mendoza, MD, MPH, MS
Commissioner of Public Health

For immediate release

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Monroe County Public Health Advisory

Rochester, NY – Monroe County Executive Adam Bello, Commissioner of Public Health Dr. Michael Mendoza and Addiction Services Director Dr. Tisha Smith are warning residents about a deadly substance being found in street drugs in Monroe County. Xylazine, often referred to as “Horse Tranquilizer”, has been linked to fatal overdoses in Monroe County.

Xylazine is a commonly used sedative, muscle relaxer and analgesic in animals. Xylazine is not approved for human use and can produce significant harmful and unexpected effects. These effects could include:

- Central nervous system depression, such as blurred vision, disorientation, dizziness, drowsiness, having difficulty moving, slurred speech, and fatigue
- Respiratory depression, such as shallow or stopping breathing
- Cardiovascular effects, such as low blood pressure and slower heart rate

Xylazine has been found to be cut in heroin, fentanyl and cocaine. Narcan does not work on this substance, however Narcan should still be used since Xylazine is often mixed with opioids.

“Too many families have lost mothers and fathers, husbands and wives, sons and daughters as a result of the opioid crisis happening in our neighborhoods and on our streets. The recent spike in overdoses in our community is devastating families. We have seen what happens when people facing addiction have nowhere to turn, and it has to stop,” **said County Executive Adam Bello**. “If you or someone you know needs help, please call the Monroe County IMPACT team at (585) 753-5278. There are resources here to help, and show you that you are not alone.”

“One of the most troubling aspects of all of this is that there is help available, yet people continue to die. We are working hard to connect individuals and families with the resources and support they need to overcome substance abuse disorder, and we will continue to do so until this crisis is over,” **added Public Health Commissioner Dr. Michael Mendoza**.

The Monroe County IMPACT team (Addiction Services) was created nearly a year ago and has brought greater focus and coordination to treating people and families suffering from addiction. The IMPACT team has visited nearly every house where an overdose has occurred within 24-hours, including nearly 100 overdoses, visitations and referrals in the last three months alone.

The IMPACT hotline is available weekdays between 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. by calling (585) 753-5278 or emailing Impact@monroecounty.gov. Additionally, Open Access is a service that is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for individuals in need of substance use evaluation. Any resident or family member who is in need of treatment and care can call Open Access at (585) 627-1777.

“Every day, we have boots on the ground looking for ways to prevent overdoses and deaths from occurring. We are building relationships, expanding available resources and paying attention to the unique needs of our community as it faces this scourge,” **concluded Dr. Tisha Smith, Monroe County Addiction Services Director.**

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