

Pembroke Regional Hospital Launches Naloxone Distribution Program To Address Opioid Crisis

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The Pembroke Regional Hospital's Emergency Department is excited about their work to support the *Naloxone Distribution Program*. In response to opioid overdoses in the region, Pembroke Regional Hospital (PRH) has officially launched this program in partnership with the Renfrew County and District Health Unit (RCDHU). This initiative, which went live on October 1st, aims to make Naloxone kits more accessible to individuals at risk of an opioid overdose, as well as their family members and friends who may need to respond to an overdose emergency.

Naloxone is a life-saving medication that temporarily reverses the effects of an opioid overdose by restoring breathing. Opioids affect the part of the brain that controls breathing which is why taking too much of the drug can slow breathing and lead to unconsciousness and death.

With opioid use and overdoses on the rise, this program is part of the region's broader harm reduction strategy and reflects the hospital's commitment to supporting the health and safety of its patients and the community.

"This program is a critical step in ensuring that those most at risk, as well as their loved ones, have access to this life-saving medication and the education needed to use it properly," said Beth Brownlee, Vice-President of Clinical and Support Services and Chief Nursing Executive.

PRH staff, trained by the RCDHU earlier this year, are equipped to provide training on Naloxone use to anyone receiving a kit. The training includes recognizing the signs of an overdose, the importance of calling 911, administering Naloxone, and performing chest compressions if required while waiting for emergency responders to arrive. Education on overdose prevention and the proper care of Naloxone kits is also part of the program.

At PRH, the Naloxone kits are available through the Emergency Department, the Acute Mental Health and Intensive Care units. The kits are also available at local pharmacies and other hospitals in the region in partnership with the RCDHU.

"This program isn't just about distributing Naloxone - it's about education and empowering individuals to respond effectively to an overdose situation," Mrs. Brownlee said. "It's part of a larger harm reduction strategy to support our community and prevent avoidable deaths."

If you suspect that someone has overdosed, or in the event that Naloxone is administered, be sure to call 911 for first responder assistance.

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