



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

Harckham Hosts Naloxone Training in Thornwood to Battle Opioid Overdoses

PETE HARCKHAM June 7, 2022

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Thornwood, NY – New York State Sen. Pete Harckham, joined by Westchester County Legislator Margaret Cunzio, hosted a naloxone training on Monday, June 6 at the Thornwood Fire Department, giving both first responders and interested residents an opportunity to learn how to reverse the effects of an opioid overdose.

Christopher Caulfield, an opioid overdose outreach training specialist with the state’s Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) based in Albany, led the two-hour-long training session, which focused on both the administering of naloxone, a powerful opioid antagonist, and instruction in rescue breathing.

“The opioid overdose epidemic that our country is experiencing right now necessitates that residents in our communities are ready and have the means to help save a life whenever possible,” said Harckham. “The naloxone training offered by OASAS simply increases the number of people who know how to administer an opioid antagonist, and I am grateful to Legislator Cunzio, the Thornwood Fire Department and OASAS for making this training possible.”

“Naloxone trainings like this one can save lives,” said Cunzio, who also serves as a firefighter with the Thornwood Fire Department. “It is imperative that we continue to hold these training sessions to educate others and to give them the skills to make a difference in our community. This issue is one that affects many people, and I thank Senator Harckham for coordinating this training with me, and bringing this knowledge to Mount Pleasant and the Thornwood Fire Department. Working together, we can make a difference in the lives of others; and together, we can help save lives.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), nearly 700,000 people died between 1999 and 2021 from an overdose involving an opioid, including both illicit and prescription drugs. Because of continuing isolation and despair caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, provisional CDC data shows that overdose death reached an all-time high of 100,306 for the 12-month period ending in April 2021, with 75,673 of the overdose deaths involving an opioid. The surge in deaths is partly attributable to the rise in use and prevalence of illicitly manufactured synthetic opioids like fentanyl.

The naloxone training participants learned how to administer naloxone as a pre-packaged, FDA-approved nasal spray. More first responders are being trained to use naloxone, and families with members with an opioid use disorder should have the opioid antagonist nearby. People should still call 911 in the event of an overdose.

Harckham has hosted six training sessions since 2019. Participants at the Thornwood training received an emergency kit with two doses of naloxone.

“I am thankful to Senator Harckham for inviting me to offer this naloxone training,” said Caulfield. “We know how many families have been impacted by the opioid crisis, and we have access to life saving medication. It is critical that more people get trained to help save lives.”