

# DIVERSION NEWS



A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESOURCE DEPARTMENT, ORANGE COUNTY, NC VOLUME 1 • ISSUE 2 • SPRING 2023

## DIVERSION/DEFLECTION

The CJRD administers diversion and deflection programming for youth, first time adult offenders, people with substance use disorders, individuals with criminal records and people experiencing homelessness.



The purpose of a diversion programs is to reduce the harm of legal system involvement for individuals by diverting them to therapeutic harm reduction and educational resources.

Participants work with a diversion coordinator to complete a diversion plan that addresses accountability, collateral consequences of legal system involvement and service referrals.

### CJRJD Diversion Programs include the Lantern Project, OC-PAD, YDP, and SOHRAD

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The Lantern Project serves adults with substance use disorder.  
[www.orangecountync.gov/LanternProject](http://www.orangecountync.gov/LanternProject)  
Megan Pickard: [mpickard@orangecountync.gov](mailto:mpickard@orangecountync.gov)

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OC-PAD serves adult first time offenders of certain low-level misdemeanors.  
[www.orangecountync.gov/OCPAD](http://www.orangecountync.gov/OCPAD)  
Desmond Frierson: [dfrierson@orangecountync.gov](mailto:dfrierson@orangecountync.gov)

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The Youth Deflection Program (YDP) serves youth who commit low level non-violent offenses.  
[www.orangecountync.gov/YDP](http://www.orangecountync.gov/YDP)  
Tami Pfeifer: [tpfeifer@orangecountync.gov](mailto:tpfeifer@orangecountync.gov)

Street Outreach, Harm Reduction, and Deflection (SOHRAD) works with people experiencing homelessness.  
[www.orangecountync.gov/SOHRAD](http://www.orangecountync.gov/SOHRAD)  
Tiffany Hall: [tihall@orangecountync.gov](mailto:tihall@orangecountync.gov)

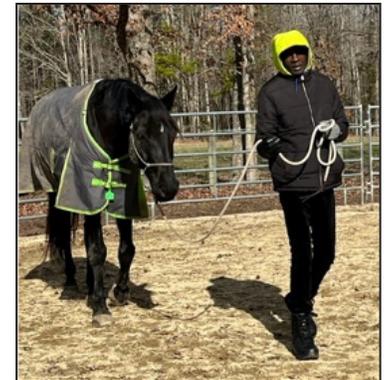
#### Page 7

Community Care Diversion Response Team will divert individuals with serious mental illnesses and co-occurring disorders from arrest and incarceration.

## Come and experience the Healing Power of Horses

The Criminal Justice Resource Department is pleased to promote this new programming opportunity for justice-involved youth and adults.

Referrals can be made by any court or court stakeholder and should be submitted to CJRD Director Caitlin Fenhagen at 919-245-2303.



The mission of Sincerus Healing is to offer the power of horses to support self-awareness and promote healing. Come spend your Saturday interacting with horses, and learn more about yourself in the process! Transportation to the farm and lunch provided. There is no cost to the participant.

**Saturdays:**  
**April 15, May 13 & June 10**  
**9am - 2pm**

**Meet at 9am at the Courthouse at 106 E. Margaret Lane in Hillsborough**



## OUR MISSION

The mission of the Orange County Criminal Justice Resource Department (CJRJD) is to safely reduce unnecessary pretrial incarceration, increase jail alternatives and diversion opportunities, reduce the number of individuals with behavioral health issues facing justice involvement and incarceration, reduce recidivism, reduce racial and economic disparities, and increase public safety by providing treatment and support for individuals involved in Orange County's criminal legal system.



Orange County Courthouse  
106 E. Margaret Lane, Hillsborough, NC 27278  
(919) 245-2303

[www.orangecountync.gov/CJRJD](http://www.orangecountync.gov/CJRJD)



## THE LANTERN PROJECT - BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DIVERSION

The Lantern Project is a pre-arrest deflection, post-charge diversion and reentry program that works with individuals who have substance use disorders and varying behavioral health needs.



Funded by a grant from the Department of Health and Human Services, the Lantern team works with individuals in Orange County who have or risk pending charges that stem from their substance use and behavioral health symptoms.

The program receives diversion referrals from various partners, including the District Attorney's office, with the goal of giving participants an opportunity to avoid charge or to receive favorable dispositions of their pending charges, or dismissal when possible, once they engage in and participate in the program.

The Lantern team explores with the participant what steps will be the most appropriate based on their individual situation. Examples of the type of assistance that the Lantern Project will assist an individual with are connection to treatment programs, harm reduction education, help with medications, provision of phones and phone service for individuals, help with transportation to varying appointments and court dates, and one-on-one support from a Peer Support Specialist, a Diversion or Reentry Navigator, and a Clinician.

### Eligibility:

- Individual must be 18 years old
- Individual may have an open or pending court case (felony or misdemeanor)
- Individual has a behavioral health diagnosis (with primary being substance use disorder)
- Individual can have a criminal background
- Individual is currently detained or has been released from prison within the past month (Reentry)
- Referrals can be pre-charge or post-charge (Diversion)
- Diversion Charge restrictions
  - No domestic violence charges, unless approved by district Attorney Office
  - No Chapter 20 traffic charges
  - No charge that involves the use of a weapon
  - \*Final discretion on diversion referral remains with law enforcement officers and the District Attorney's Office



### Success Case:

In July of 2022, the Lantern Project started assisting a client, Mr. RC, who suffered from mental health symptoms and an intellectual disability, had pending felony charges, and was at risk of going to prison. Mr. RC had been living outside, unhoused, for a long time, so finding help to improve his current situation was hard and difficult to access, especially after losing support from family and relatives.

The Lantern team worked closely with Mr. RC to connect him to the resources he needed. He was referred to the Aya Center Community Support Team for case management and therapy services, and to the Street Outreach, Harm Reduction and Deflection (SOHRAD) team for connections to housing and other essential services. Additionally, because Mr. RC's mental health condition often causes him to forget about his appointments and taking his medication, the Lantern team takes a non-traditional service approach and makes time for Mr. RC at whatever time he comes into the office.

Mr. RC is also able to come in to the office and get some snacks and water without feeling that he is unwelcome. In this way, the team makes sure that his mental health challenges are not a barrier to accessing resources and that a trusting relationship with Mr. RC is being developed.

Mr. RC applied for a housing voucher for which he has been approved and is currently waiting for an apartment to open up and to move in. The Lantern team will continue to check in on Mr. RC and make sure his mental health needs are being addressed. Furthermore, Mr. RC's charges were resolved with a probation sentence and he did not have to serve time in prison, which was a great legal outcome and one that ensures his continued stability.



The future for Mr. RC is promising with the new systems of support that he has acquired. He will hopefully soon move into an apartment and finally be safe from the dangers of living outside.

Most importantly, he will also have a sense of security and humanity, as no one deserves to live under the conditions he faces. It is our hope that this will have a domino effect and that after moving into his apartment, Mr. RC will attain even greater mental health stability, continue to reduce his substance use, improve his health, and overall, have a better quality of life.

### Significant Challenges:

1. The R.J. Blackley Alcohol and Drug Abuse Treatment center in Butner (ADATC), NC—the main facility where incarcerated Lantern participants were previously being referred to—is being repurposed into a 54-bed inpatient psychiatric hospital for children and adolescents operated by UNC Health.

Although this is an important step to address a clear gap in health services, the repurposing of the R. J. Blackley ADATC facility results a profound resource loss for individuals in jail who are in need of services for detoxification and substance use stabilization. The Lantern team will not be able to refer participants to them anymore.

Transportation has consistently been an issue as the majority of Lantern participants do not have their own vehicle or share one with other family members. This issue has now grown in scale given that the R. J. Blackley ADATC facility in Butner, NC, (now psychiatric hospital) was about a 30-minute drive from Orange County and that the new facility, Walter B. Jones ADATC in Greenville, NC, where Lantern participants will need to be referred to is at least a 2-hour drive from Orange County. CJRD's Clinical Coordinator explains:

*"We used to be able to send people to R. J. Blackley on a detainer, meaning that those with serious charges who would not otherwise have been considered for release were able to access medical detox services (and other services including psychiatry and therapy) at*

*R. J. Blackley, which was a locked facility, so individuals would be transported to and from the treatment center by the Orange County Sheriff's Office.*

*Since R. J. Blackley closed its substance use treatment program, the only option for people in custody is the location in Greenville, NC, and the OCSO will not likely have the capacity to drive individuals over two hours each way to treatment."*

*– Alison Zirkel, Clinical CJRD Coordinator*

2. Besides a shortage of local treatment detox facilities, there is also insufficient funding to purchase Naloxone kits to supply our vending machines and meet community needs.

While the Lantern Project is able to use grant funding to make these purchases, state and county harm reduction providers do not have free kits available anymore. The CJRD is now hoping that opioid settlement funding can fill the need.

3. On another note, as data below indicates, the racial and ethnic demographics of the population the Lantern project is serving do not match the demographics of the overall Black population.

It is evident that African American/Black individuals are disproportionately represented in the criminal legal system compared to the overall African American/Black population.

Sadly, Lantern data reinforces this fact—the population we are serving is indeed a reflection of the disparities we see in our criminal legal system and disproportionate to the population numbers.

4. Lastly, data shows that there is a need to provide further outreach to the Latinx/Hispanic population to ensure their access to the Lantern Project and it is important to strategically choose a data gathering method for accurate representation of diversity.

**Naloxone kits are distributed free of charge directly to Lantern participants who may need them but they are also stocked in vending machines for more discreet acquisition.**

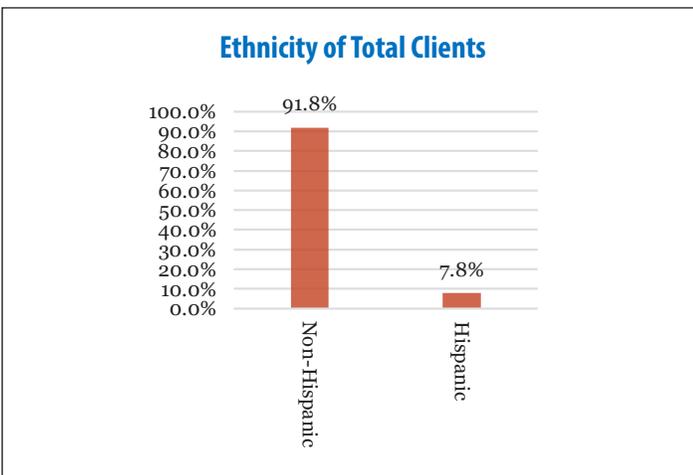
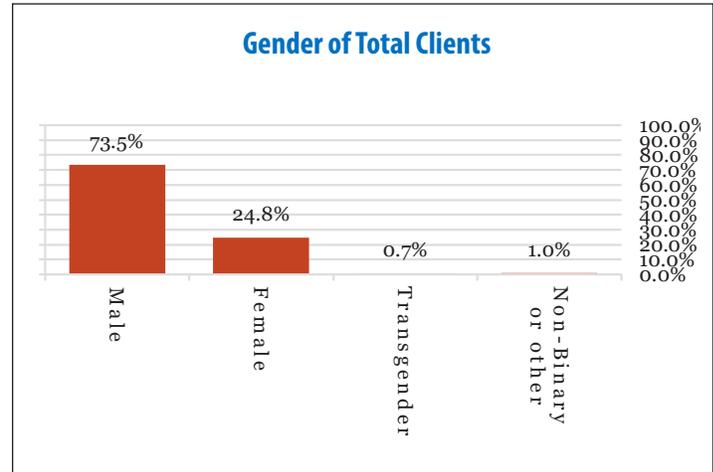
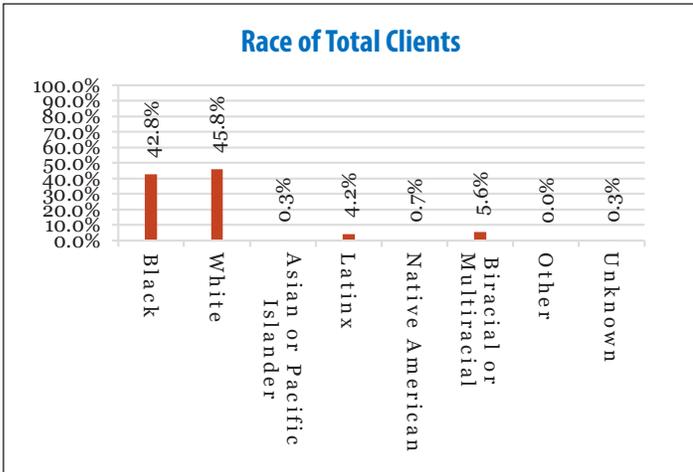
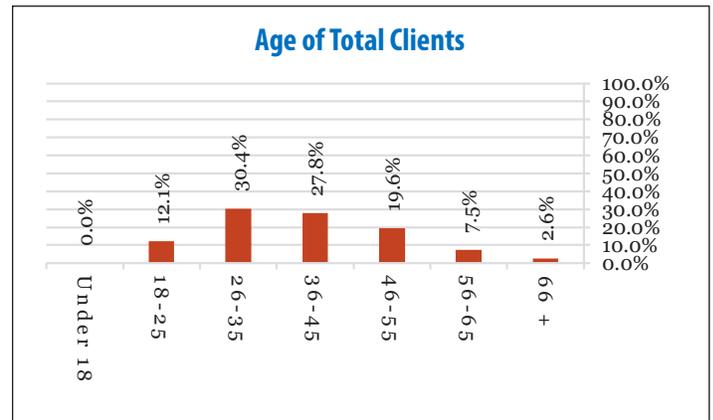
**We are happy to announce that in addition to our vending machine at Orange County's Detention Center, we now have another one at the Southern Human Services Center in Chapel Hill on Homestead Road.**



# LANTERN PROJECT DATA OCTOBER 2021 TO JANUARY 2023

## Quick facts:

- Total Diversion and Re-entry Lantern participants: 306
- Total Diversion: 100
- Total Re-entry: 206
- Total Treatment connections: 604
- Total Recovery Support connections: 378
- Total Naloxone kits distributed: 450
- Total overdoses: 25
- Total overdoses reversed: 25



*\*The percent of Hispanic participants is higher than the percent of Latinx participants due to the fact that Hispanic was recorded as an ethnicity and Latinx as a race for grant reporting purposes and there were Hispanic participants that were counted as White and not Latinx. So, because there is not clarity or consistency regarding whether Latinx is a race or an ethnicity, it is important to note that data above may not be an adequate reading on diversity.*



Since the launch of the Lantern Project, a team of Clinicians, Peer Support Specialists, and Diversion and Reentry Navigators have worked with hundreds of participants to support their needs and promote their recovery.

Some of the types of activities that the Lantern Project team engages in with participants include direct emotional support, substance use-focused interventions, referral navigation, psychoeducational skill-building, and harm reduction education.

The team has also connected participants to a variety of services across the community, including substance use treatment, housing resources, physical and mental health care, legal services, and reentry supports.



## WHY WE DO OUR WORK: POEM BY LANTERN PROJECT PARTICIPANT

### *“Something Special For Those Who Fight For Us”*

All throughout our lives we’ve been stereotyped often considered as the worst. Until along came a group of compassionate ladies who revived the good inside us that we’d lost they take time from their life to show us our worth. From the very first meeting giving our lives hope and purposeful meaning. We are the hurt who have different ways to heal our emotions but we are blessed no less these ladies offer opportunity to embrace pure devotion.

They give hope that it’s finally our time to shine if were lost they search to find. The means to put our past where it belongs and that’s behind. It takes a special type of kindness to help us who were lost see through drug addictions blindness, these are the ladies that dedicate their time to bringing sight back to us who substance had blind.

We remain humble and grateful and they will guide us to prosper in due time. Rest assured we can all be cured and we never fail to take heed to the signs . . . Thanks to the ladies of the CJRD for all that you do for us . . . and also to Ted Dorsi for seeing what’s good inside of us at times when even we can’t see the good . . . for having faith in us!

*“HOPE YOU ALL ENJOY IT, ITS FROM THE HEART of a man who’s never been given the proper chance at treatment to change his life but instead time again been cast into prisons across NC from the age of 16 yrs young... THANK YOU”*

— J. W., Lantern Participant, 2/2/23

## ORANGE COUNTY PRE-ARREST DIVERSION (OC-PAD) PROGRAM



The purpose of the Orange County Pre-Arrest Diversion (OC-PAD) program is to provide law enforcement officers discretion to divert individuals who commit eligible misdemeanor offenses away from the criminal legal system, to resources and programing that educates, addresses therapeutic needs and reduces the harm of court involvement and the collateral consequences of having a public record.



### Eligibility:

- Final discretion on diversion referral remains with law enforcement and the Orange County District Attorney’s Office
- The individual must be 18 years or older
- No prior adult criminal record (can have prior Department of Juvenile Justice involvement)
- No prior OC-PAD or Misdemeanor Diversion Program (MDP) involvement
- Must have committed one or more of the eligible offenses or have the consent of the District Attorney
- Restitution, if required, must be resolved outside the OC-PAD process

### Success:

OC-PAD celebrated the program’s four year anniversary! On February 4th, 2023, marked OC-PAD’s fourth year of providing first time offenders an opportunity for diversion and for greater outlooks of their involvement in the criminal legal system.

### Challenge:

It is challenging in the receiving end to ensure that the OC-PAD referrals are made equitably—that individuals are referred to the program regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, ability, etc.

## YOUTH DEFLECTION PROGRAM (YDP)



YDP aims to reduce the harm of court involvement for Orange County youth who commit low level, non-violent offenses and who, in the discretion of law enforcement, could be better served with community interventions than in the court system.

### Eligibility:

- 17 years old or younger at the time of offense
- No pending juvenile record
- Must be a misdemeanor or low-level non-violent felony offense or a youth at present risk for such an offense
- Final discretion on referral remains with law enforcement officers, the District Attorney's Office, and school officials
- Restitution, if required, must be resolved outside the process.

### Success:

When kids get into fights at school the school response is suspension but there can also be a legal consequence and a petition is sent to the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). When that process begins, it could result in 6-12 months of involvement with a court counselor and possibly court.

After developing a positive partnership with officers in our Orange County and Chapel Hill Carrboro Schools, YDP is receiving youth referrals as an alternative to DJJ when school fights occur. Recently, we have been able to connect these students with the Dispute Settlement Center to engage in restorative and accountability conversations to address any conflict and harm that has occurred. We have also been able to learn more about the challenges and struggles that the particular young person is managing. This, in turn, helps us better connect them to supports such as counseling and opportunities or experiences that will build up their capacities to handle situations in the future and avoid trouble. Recently, the following connections have been made.

- Referrals to school based therapy
- Connection to family intervention services
- Opportunity to play on a team sport
- Connection to a school coach for mentorship
- An experience to create art for the public to see
- Connection to a local nonprofit to join a bike club
- Connection to a job program through a local non-profit

When kids have support and engage in positive activities, they are less likely to engage in negative behavior. That is the goal of YDP, giving kids and families the support they need so that the behavior that can lead to legal trouble can be minimized. Addressing the roots of issues is always going to be more effective than just providing punitive measures.

### Challenge:

One challenge with YDP is that it can be difficult to get young people connected to supports quickly. Our mental health and substance use treatment systems are overburdened and there are limited resources for young people. It is challenging to know what kids need and not be able to connect them quickly.

## STREET OUTREACH, HARM REDUCTION, AND DEFLECTION (SOHRAD)

The Street Outreach, Harm Reduction & Deflection program (SOHRAD) works with the unsheltered population of Orange County by connecting them with housing and other supportive resources. These resources can range from mental health, substance use treatment, medical care, legal documentation, criminal justice assistance, etc. Another component of SOHRAD is harm reduction and diversion.

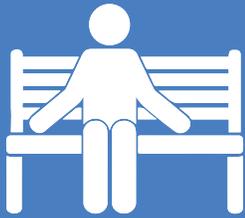
SOHRAD works with local law enforcement agencies to divert individuals who have been involved in low-level offenses away from arrest and with a warm handoff towards appropriate treatment options.

The program also provides harm reduction information and materials, education supplies, and linkage to resources. SOHRAD uses a relationship-based model to provide ongoing engagement and case management for people living unsheltered. SOHRAD is co-managed



by the Orange County Criminal Justice Resource Department and the Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness in the Orange County Housing & Community Development Department.

## Help for people experiencing homelessness



### CONNECT TO HOUSING AND SERVICES

#### Orange County Housing Helpline

- Homelessness prevention
- Eviction prevention
- Shelter referrals
- Permanent housing
- Connections to security deposits, utility deposits, rental assistance

*(all program availability dependent on funding)*

**Monday-Friday, 10am-4pm**

**(919) 245-2655, [housinghelp@orangecountync.gov](mailto:housinghelp@orangecountync.gov)**

**In-person drop-in hours: Mondays, 9am-1pm**

**IFC Commons**

**110 West Main St, Carrboro**

**Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:30am - 4pm**

**Southern Human Services Center**

**2501 Homestead Rd, Chapel Hill**



### HELP FOR PEOPLE LIVING UNSHELTERED

#### Street Outreach, Harm Reduction and Deflection (SOHRAD) team

- Welfare checks for people living outside or in cars
- Connections to housing & services
- Case management and peer support
- Harm Reduction outreach
- Law enforcement deflection or warm hand-off where safety is not an issue

**Monday-Friday, 8am-9pm**

**Saturday, 12 noon-9pm**

**(919) 886-3351, [SOHRAD@orangecountync.gov](mailto:SOHRAD@orangecountync.gov)**

**Chapel Hill Police Department Crisis Unit Hours:**

**Monday-Friday: 7am-12:30am**



## COMMUNITY CARE AND DIVERSION RESPONSE (CCDR)



The Orange County Criminal Justice Resource Department was awarded a grant in the amount of \$1,193,745.00 on November 28, 2022 by the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services.

The contract for the grant, entitled Police and Mental Health Collaborations for Diversion Programs, was fully executed on 2/2/23. The grant runs from January 2023 to September 30, 2025.

The grant provides for the creation of a Community Care and Diversion Response (CCDR) team coordinated by the CJRD that will enhance law enforcement diversion and collaboration for individuals with serious mental illness. The grant funds will cover a full-time position in the CJRD to serve as the Mental Health Diversion Coordinator.

Additionally, the grant funds four social worker positions that will operate in each of the major law enforcement agencies in Orange County: the Orange County Sheriff's Office, the Chapel Hill Police Department, the Hillsborough Police Department and the Carrboro Police Department.

Finally, this grant will fund two therapeutic positions that will work at Chapel Hill's Freedom House Recovery Center: a mental health clinician and a peer support specialist. The Mental Health Diversion Coordinator in the CJRD will be starting this fiscal year and the Social Worker in the Orange County Sheriff's Office to start in the next fiscal year.

The purpose of the CCDR team is to increase and expand pre-arrest and post-charge diversion opportunities, clinical care, peer support and person-centered case management for individuals with serious mental health issues.

The grant will formalize another collaboration between law enforcement agencies, the CJRD and Freedom House that will serve individuals at risk of criminal legal system involvement. The CCDR team will focus specifically on diverting the growing population of individuals with serious mental illness and co-occurring disorders from arrest and incarceration.

The CJRD Coordinator will provide supervision to the social workers embedded in the agencies and training on trauma-informed mental health interventions to the law enforcement agencies.

This coordinated and collaborative team approach between clinicians, social workers, peer support, and law enforcement officers will ensure greater awareness, communication and consistency in the law enforcement and treatment response to individuals with serious mental health issues who frequently interact with our law enforcement agencies, courts and behavioral health care systems.

# Save These Dates!

**April 10, 12:30-2pm**

Fireside Chat

Colonial Inn, Hillsborough, NC

**Speakers:** The Honorable Anita Earls, NC Supreme Court Justice, and Kerwin Pittman Social Justice Advocate and CEO of Recidivism Reduction Educational Program Services

**Moderator:** Hillsborough Mayor, Jennifer Weaver  
**INVITE ONLY**

**April 22, 11-3pm**

Family and Community Engagement (F.A.C.E.) event

Fairview Park, Hillsborough, NC

**EVERYONE INVITED**

**April 28, 6-9pm**

Journeys—Stories and photos of justice impacted people, book reading and signing  
Hillsborough Last Friday Art Walk  
C3, 128 N. Churton Street

**EVERYONE INVITED**



**APRIL IS NC REENTRY MONTH!**



ORANGE COUNTY LOCAL REENTRY COUNCIL



[www.orangecountync.gov/CJRD](http://www.orangecountync.gov/CJRD)

# HOW TO RECOGNIZE AN OPIOID OVERDOSE

The following are signs and symptoms to look for to identify a potential overdose:

LOSS OF CONSCIOUSNESS, LIMP BODY	SLOWED BREATHING, CHOKING	SMALL, "PINPOINT" PUPILS	PALE, BLUE OR COLD SKIN	SLOWED HEART RATE

## HOW TO USE NARCAN NASAL SPRAY:

**Before use, check for signs of opioid overdose:**

- Will not wake up or respond to your voice or touch
  - Breathing is very slow, irregular, or has stopped
  - Center part of their eye is very small, sometimes called "pinpoint pupils"
- Lay the person on their back to receive a dose of NARCAN Nasal Spray.



- 1** Peel back the package to remove the device. Hold the device with your thumb on the bottom of the plunger and 2 fingers on the nozzle.
- 2** Tilt the person's head back and provide support under their neck with your hand. Gently insert the tip of the nozzle into **one** nostril, until your fingers touch the bottom of the person's nose.
- 3** Press the plunger firmly to give the dose of NARCAN Nasal Spray into the patient's nose. Remove the NARCAN Nasal Spray from the nostril after giving the dose.

Move the person on their side (recovery position) after giving NARCAN Nasal Spray.

### 4. Get emergency medical help right away.

- Watch the person closely. If the person does not respond by waking up to voice or touch, or breathing normally, another dose may be given.
- NARCAN Nasal Spray may be dosed every 2 to 3 minutes, if available.
- Repeat Step 2 using a new NARCAN Nasal Spray to give another dose in the other nostril.
- If additional NARCAN Nasal Sprays are available, repeat step 2 every 2 to 3 minutes until the person responds or emergency medical help is received.

Use NARCAN Nasal Spray (naloxone hydrochloride) for known or suspected opioid overdose in adults and children. Important: For use in the nose only. Do not remove or test the NARCAN Nasal Spray until ready to use.