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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HEALing Community Study (HCS) Launches Communication Campaign in Genesee County

The Genesee County Health Department, Genesee/Orleans Council on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (GCASA) and other community partners are excited to join 33 other communities across New York, Kentucky, Massachusetts, and Ohio in launching the first communications campaign for the HEALing Communities Study. The first campaign running from October 3 – December 2, 2022 is focused on raising awareness of the dangers of illicit fentanyl, a drug that is present in more than three-quarters of the 2,000+ overdose deaths that occur in New York each year (source: [NY State Opioid Annual Report 2021](#)). In addition to sharing facts about the dangers of illicit fentanyl, the HEALing Communities Study campaign teaches ways to protect our loved ones and community members from a fatal fentanyl overdose including:

- Knowing the signs and how to respond to an overdose.
- Getting trained and carrying naloxone (also known as Narcan® or Kloxxado™), an FDA-approved medication that can save someone's life if they are overdosing on opioids, whether it is a prescription opioid pain medicine, heroin, or a drug contaminated with fentanyl.

“We are eager to continue the work that we have been doing to reduce overdose deaths in Genesee County,” stated Paul Pettit, Public Health Director for Genesee and Orleans County Health Departments (GO Health). “The HEALing Communities Study will provide additional technical assistance and financial resources to help support and expand the collaborative initiatives that the Genesee-Orleans-Wyoming (GOW) Opioid Task Force is implementing.”

About the HEALing Communities Study

The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) estimates that 2.1 million Americans have opioid use disorder (OUD), yet fewer than 20% of those receive specialty care in a given year. New York State has one of the highest rates of opioid overdose deaths in the nation. A menu of evidence-based practices (EBPs) exists,

including opioid overdose education and naloxone distribution programs, prescription opioid safety, FDA-approved medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD), behavioral therapies, and recovery support services. Unfortunately, these EBPs have largely failed to penetrate community settings.

As a result, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) launched the HEALing Communities Study (HCS) to identify the EBPs that are most effective at the local level in preventing and treating Opioid Use Disorder. The goal of the study is to reduce opioid-related overdose deaths by 40 percent. The first phase of the study, which ended June 30, occurred in Cayuga, Columbia, Greene, Erie, Lewis, Putnam, Suffolk, and Ulster Counties. The second phase of the study will now run through December 2023 in Broome, Chautauqua, Cortland, Genesee, Monroe, Orange, Sullivan, and Yates counties. In support of this work, Genesee County is collaborating with local partners on a newly formed workgroup as part of the existing GOW Opioid Taskforce to launch three communications campaigns:

1. Naloxone and Fentanyl Education (10/3/2022-12/2/2022)
2. Medication for Opioid Use Disorder Awareness (3/6/2023-5/5/2023)
3. MOUD Treatment Retention (8/7/2023-10/6/2023)

If you are interested in joining the HEALing Communities Work Group or other GOW Opioid Task Force Work Groups, please contact Christen Foley at cferraro@gcasa.org.

To learn more about the HEALing Communities Study and to help end overdoses in Genesee County, visit:

- HEALing Communities Study Website: HealTogetherNY.org/Genesee
- GOW Opioid Taskforce Website: www.gowopioidtaskforce.org/
- GO Health Facebook: www.facebook.com/GOHealthNY

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