State of Vermont  
Executive Department  
A Proclamation

WHEREAS, Vermont has seen a 36% increase in the number of fatal opioid overdoses between 2020 and 2021, making 2021 the year with the highest number of fatal opioid overdoses to date, and 77 Vermonters have lost their life to an opioid overdose through May 2022; and

WHEREAS, the drug supply continues to change and add complexity to Vermonters trying to prevent an overdose, with fentanyl being involved in 93% of fatal overdoses in 2021, cocaine being involved in 48% and xylazine being involved in 14% of fatal opioid overdoses in 2021; and

WHEREAS, most victims of overdose are young people in the prime of their lives and the death of a young person from a preventable cause is a tragedy; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted substance use and particularly opioid overdoses in Vermont and across the nation; and

WHEREAS, Vermonters experiencing opioid use disorder continue to face stigma which can be a barrier to reaching out for potentially life-saving harm reduction, treatment, or recovery services; and

WHEREAS, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery partners in Vermont continue to work tirelessly in expanding evidence-based services and to support Vermonters in reducing their risk of overdose; and

WHEREAS, this year, the State of Vermont increased investment in prevention, treatment, and recovery resources by nearly nine million dollars to strengthen work and save lives; and

WHEREAS, service providers, first responders, Vermonters using opioids, and their loved ones have worked to address stigma and increase education and resources to reduce Vermonters’ risk of overdose; and

WHEREAS, the lives of families and friends are gravely affected by these tragic losses and more support is essential to support the grieving; and

WHEREAS, a day to reflect on the loss of a loved one is necessary to promote healing to those affected by substance use death.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Philip B. Scott, Governor, hereby proclaim August 31, 2022 as

OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY

in Vermont.

Given under my hand and the Great Seal of the State of Vermont on this 30th day of August, A.D. 2022.

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Philip B. Scott
Governor

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Brittney L. Wilson
Secretary of Civil and Military Affairs