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## Opioid deaths drop in Manchester, Nashua

Nashua records no monthly opioid deaths for first time in 3 years



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**Ray Brewer**

**NASHUA, N.H.** — Newly released figures show signs of progress in the fight against the opioid addiction crisis in New Hampshire.

Health officials said opioid deaths in Manchester and Nashua dropped by 18 percent over the past year. And for the first time in more than three years, there were no confirmed opioid overdose deaths in Nashua last month.



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"What it shows is that our systems are working," said Bobbie Bagley, Nashua public health director. "It shows that we have enough Narcan out in our community. It shows that people are using the resources that are available."

Those resources include the Safe Station program, which allows those suffering from substance abuse problems to walk into a fire station and get help 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Since the program began in November 2016, it has been accessed more than 2,500 times.

Bagley said prevention is the key to breaking the cycle of addiction.

"The best thing we can do is educate the youth, educate parents, educate our adults and folks that are around them on the effects and impacts of using substances," she said.

"I think the next step really involves continuing to invest in our system," said Donna Arias, executive director of the Nashua Youth Council.

Arias said the news that opioid deaths are down year to year is encouraging, but she worries about complacency.

"I think sometimes when the numbers start to get good, we tend to forget about the problems, and that's when we see a bigger problem arise," she said.

City officials met last week with state lawmakers and said that continuing the dialogue is extremely important as New Hampshire continues to fight against opioid addiction.

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