*Update # 2-Delaware State Police and Delaware Department of Health and Social Services Issue Urgent Safety Advisory

The Delaware State Police (DSP) and the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) continue to urge heightened awareness following a surge in suspected drug overdoses in Sussex County over the past week. DHSS today reports they are now seeing cases in Kent County that require intubation and a level of care seen in Sussex during its recent overdose spike, as well as a suspected fatality related to overdose.

There have been 42 suspected overdoses in Kent County since April 26. Kent County suspected overdoses were not included in previous safety updates. However, data is now included due to recent activity in Kent County showing similarities to the activity in Sussex County.

Between April 26 and May 3, 2024, troopers recorded a significant increase in the number of suspected overdoses and the severity of the emergencies in Sussex. To date, there have been 83 suspected overdoses in Sussex County. Toxicology tests are pending to confirm two additional suspected overdose fatalities, bringing the total of suspected overdose fatalities to five over the same time period for Kent and Sussex counties.

“We are seeing a greater number of patients being treated for suspected overdose but, more notably, a significant increase in the severity of the effects of overdoses,” said **Delaware Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Director Joanna**

Champney. “This severity is reflected in a greater percentage of patients needing admission with many of them requiring intubation, ICU level care, and multiple days in the hospital.”

While the majority of suspected overdoses have been in the greater area of Georgetown, Millsboro, and Milford, incidents are occurring throughout Sussex County. The locations are listed in no particular order and do not encompass all suspected overdoses.

DSP enlisted the Delaware National Guard to conduct testing on Wednesday, May 1, on a sampling of the drugs found in those who had overdosed to determine the composition of the substance. The Delaware National Guard’s 31st Civil Support Team has the capability to test for a broad spectrum of chemicals. Initial samples showed packages containing Xylazine, Bromazolam, Fentanyl, Quinine, and Caffeine.

DHSS and DSP urge the public to exercise extreme caution, refrain from consuming unknown substances, and avoid illegal drugs altogether. Individuals struggling with substance abuse are encouraged to seek immediate assistance from medical professionals or addiction support services. To assist those in need, DHSS offers several avenues for support:

- **911**: In cases of overdose or medical emergencies, dial or text 911.
- **Delaware 211**: Dial 2-1-1 or visit delaware211.orgfor free, confidential assistance in multiple languages.
- **Delaware Hope Line**: Call 1-833-9-HOPEDE (1-833-946-7333) for 24/7 access to resources, support, and crisis assistance.
- **Bridge Clinics**: Explore treatment services and resources in Delaware and neighboring states. In-person assessments are available at locations in New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties.
- **Treatment Connection**: Find nearby treatment providers

at TreatmentConnection.com.
- **988**: For immediate crisis support, dial 988.
- **Narcan Training and OpiRescueDE App**: Information on Narcan training and accessing medication is available online.

The Delaware Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH) has ensured that hospitals and community providers have access to Narcan kits. DSAMH has provided 2,000 Narcan kits to Beebe Healthcare to distribute throughout its healthcare system, and an additional 200 doses of Naloxone have been distributed to Beebe Healthcare for use in its Emergency Department. DSAMH is also providing personal protective equipment to community providers in the areas impacted.

DSAMH's Opioid Response Center is mapping areas in Sussex County where overdoses are occurring and is coordinating street outreach, community events, and Narcan distribution in those areas with various programs, providers, and Beebe Healthcare. Providers or advocates wishing to get involved in street outreach or hosting Narcan training/distribution events should contact DSAMH's Overdose Response Center (ORC) at ORC@delaware.gov. The ORC's Post Overdose Response Teams visited Dover today for community outreach and will continue to conduct outreach responses as indicated by the presence of suspected overdoses.

While many of the affected individuals exhibited symptoms resistant to Naloxone, DSAMH still encourages the use of Naloxone in the case of a potential overdose. Repeat doses of Naloxone may be necessary in these incidents to restore normal breathing. Individuals and organizations seeking to obtain Naloxone kits should visit Help is Here Delaware for training events, community training opportunities, distribution events, community overdose prevention events, and a list of organizations who provide community training opportunities.

When caring for someone who may have overdosed, be extra cautious with powdered substances as they may increase the risk of substance ingestion or transmission. When using Narcan, call 9-1-1 and remain with the person until first responders arrive.

The Delaware Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) offers the following recommendations to help prevent emergency responders' exposure to illicit drugs, including synthetic opiates:

- Gloves are all that is necessary in suspected overdose and no visible product.
- Wear a face mask with eye shield if powdered illicit drugs are visible.
- Do not touch the eyes, nose, or mouth after touching any surface that may be contaminated, even if wearing gloves.
- Wash hands with soap and water after working in an area that may be contaminated, even if gloves were worn. Do not use hand sanitizer or bleach.

The safety and well-being of all Delawareans are paramount, and collaborative efforts are underway to address this critical public safety issue. We urge everyone to remain vigilant and take proactive steps to protect themselves and their communities.