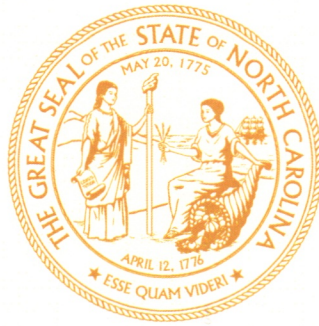




# State of North Carolina

**JOSH STEIN**  
GOVERNOR

## OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY

2026

BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

### A PROCLAMATION

**WHEREAS**, from 2000 to 2024, more than 44,500 North Carolinians were among the more than 1 million Americans who died from drug overdose; and according to updated Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates, the combined medical, social, and personal cost of drug overdose deaths in North Carolina alone surpassed \$50 billion in 2023; and

**WHEREAS**, the rates of overdose are increasing fastest among Black/African American and Hispanic North Carolinians, with 210 percent and 200 percent increases, respectively, in their overdose death rates from 2019 to 2023, while American Indian/Indigenous communities had the highest overdose rate at 111.3 deaths per 100,000 residents in 2023; and

**WHEREAS**, Medicaid plays a critical role in decreasing overdose deaths due to more individuals getting access to substance use disorder treatment; North Carolina's bipartisan Medicaid expansion in December 2023 is estimated to have helped thousands of individuals gain access to opioid use disorder treatment; recent data shows that there has been a 17 percent increase in behavioral health providers accepting Medicaid since expansion, a 29 percent decrease in the number of overdose visits to emergency departments in the first year of Medicaid expansion, and the number of overdose deaths cut in half from 2023 to 2024, one of the steepest declines in the nation; and

**WHEREAS**, between the summer of 2022 and 2025, 96 local governments spent over \$70 million of opioid settlement funds expanding life-saving services that contributed to a 34 percent decrease in overdose deaths and reduced emergency department visits statewide; and

**WHEREAS**, more than 31,000 people received treatment for opioid use disorder from one of the 96 licensed opioid treatment programs in North Carolina, and more than 1 million doses of naloxone, the life-saving overdose reversal medication, have been distributed by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services since 2020; and

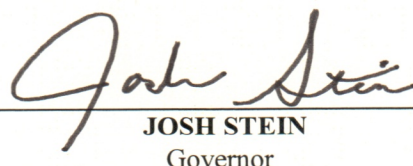
**WHEREAS**, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services launched the first mobile Opioid Treatment Program unit in the state in August 2025; and these units reduce barriers to participation in treatment by making it easier for those seeking treatment to move into and maintain recovery, especially for individuals living in rural areas, shelters, or jails; and

**WHEREAS**, disasters like Hurricane Helene can exacerbate symptoms among those with substance use disorder and increase the likelihood of relapse for those in recovery; and

**WHEREAS**, Overdose Awareness Day is a day to remember those in our great state and across the country whose lives have been lost to overdose, to recognize family and community grief, to acknowledge and address stigma related to substance use and substance use disorders across the continuum, and to renew our commitment to ending the overdose crisis;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, JOSH STEIN, Governor of the State of North Carolina, do hereby proclaim August 31, 2026, as "**OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY**" in North Carolina and commend its observance to all residents.



  
**JOSH STEIN**  
Governor

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the Great Seal of the State of North Carolina at the Capitol in Raleigh this seventeenth day of July in the year of our Lord two thousand and twenty-sixth and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fifty-first.