

'DEATHS RELATED TO OPIOID OVERDOSES ARE PREVENTABLE'

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gal or legal," he said. "This (test kit) is a means of preventing death up until they reach out for help on their own."

He said the kits, which usually cost \$1 to \$2, could be distributed through places such as pharmacies or needle exchange programs.

"I, for one, argue that a human life is worth that much," he added.

Halton commissioner and Medical Officer of Health Dr. Hamidah Meghani said the health department shares Kinkade's concerns.

"Deaths related to opioid overdoses are preventable and we take this work very seriously," she told council.

Currently, Halton operates a harm reduction program with two community outreach workers who provide provincially-funded safe drug equipment for local users, along with educational materials and necessary referrals.

The fentanyl test kits are provided by the province - at no cost - to health units that offer overdose prevention/safe injection sites, but Halton doesn't have one, explained Meghani.

Halton staff will now ex-



Torstar file photo

A fentanyl test kit can detect the powerful opioid in samples of other drugs.

amine the feasibility and financial implications of having the region provide the kits and report back to council at a later date.

Oakville Coun. Jeff Knoll deemed the kits a decent step-gap measure and said he hopes the region can expedite the initiative.

Councillors also re-

ceived a report with an update on how the region is using \$150,000 in provincial funding for harm reduction programming, which includes community naloxone distribution, opioid-related surveillance and a plan for local opioid response. For more information visit www.halton.ca.

47 HALTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS EARN ECOSCHOOL STATUS

Forty-seven schools of the Halton District School Board have been certified by the Ontario EcoSchools program for the current school year.

The EcoSchools program recognizes and celebrates schools for their environmental learning and action.

Within the board, 13 schools achieved platinum status, 16 schools were awarded gold level, 10 schools silver level and eight, bronze status. The schools include 42 elementary and five secondary.

Of note, Abbey Park Secondary School, Haw-

thorne Village, River Oaks and Ethel Gardiner public schools have been certified for 11 consecutive years.

"We congratulate all members of EcoTeams, staff, students and community members who have learned about environmental and sustainability issues in and around their schools and taken action to address them," said Suzanne Burwell, the board's environmental sustainability co-ordinator. "Not only are students learning in the classroom, they are extending that learning beyond the walls of the schools."

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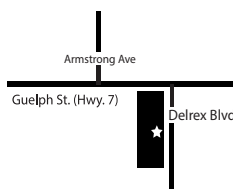


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