

# NEWS FROM THE ULSTER COUNTY OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER

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## Ulster County Comptroller Releases Opioid Snapshot Report

*Kingston, NY (February 16, 2024)* – The Ulster County Comptroller has released a second snapshot on the Opioid settlement funds received by Ulster County. In 2023, Ulster County experienced over 460 nonfatal opioid overdoses and 48 opioid-related deaths, with 4 additional likely opioid overdose cases awaiting toxicology screening. While non-fatal overdoses reported has continued to rise, 2023 data reflects a significant reduction from 2021 deaths reported, which saw a high of 71 opioid-related fatal overdoses.

Ulster County was awarded opioid settlement funds as a result of litigation brought by the New York State Attorney General. The opioid settlement funds are meant to provide funding to address the issues associated with the opioid crisis. Ulster County received \$1,297,279 from opioid settlement agreements in 2022 and \$454,627 in 2023. In addition, Ulster County received \$1.2 million in opioid settlement funding through the New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports in 2023. The opioid settlement funds will create a continuing stream of revenues through 2040, although the largest share was received in 2022. The County also receives federal grant funding through the Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Program.

Ulster County has launched a variety of programs and efforts to address the opioid crisis. The Sheriff's Office Opioid Response as County Law Enforcement program (ORACLE) is perhaps the most visible and is funded through federal grant funding sources, not settlement funds. ORACLE has distributed thousands of naloxone kits, trainings and now vending machines that is certainly having an impact on the death rate from overdoses.

In addition, the Ulster County Departments of Health and Mental Health have programs both educating the public and providing direct services. A crisis stabilization center is anticipated to be opened later this year. The Department of Mental Health has contracted with outside vendors such as Samadhi for harm reduction and Ellenville Regional Hospital to address opioid spikes.

"The Comptroller's Office advises focusing funds on effective programs like the Sheriff's ORACLE program and utilize one-time funding streams for one-time expenses. This ensures ongoing support for long-term opioid addiction treatment and prevention services." said Comptroller March Gallagher. "The cost of opioids on our community is tremendous and these funds are but a drop in the bucket for the damage inflicted on Ulster County families."

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